Caribbean Missionary Pilot

By

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DEDICATED TO

Wanda Dickson,
Who really Started It All

INTRODUCTION

The International School of Biblical Studies has grown from a primordial concept in 1977 to a worldwide outreach which is touching the lives of thousands. Someone once asked me concerning the early development of the School. I suppose this book is somewhere between an autobiography and a history of the early developments of the School. In between, there are the sentimental remembrances of an incurable pilot.

The principle setting of this book is the West Indies. That is where we put into action plans which we had developed since we were in Brazil. Much of the system of the School has been changed. However, the philosophy of system and purpose have never changed. The philosophy of system is education in Bible training by extension. The purpose of the School has always been to take advanced Bible study opportunities to preachers and church leaders who cannot attend a resident Bible school.

The International School of Biblical Studies program is where it is now because of the persevering dedication of some great people and churches. Two special churches have supported us in the School since its beginning. These two churches are the Eastwood church in Hutchinson, Kansas and the church in Stafford, Kansas. The Eastwood church has remained our personal sponsoring congregation since 1976. They have been the sponsors of the School since 1981. Two elders who have been with the Eastwood church since they assumed oversight of the School are Don Richardson and John Young. These two godly elders, with fellow elder Clint Stamper, led the Eastwood church into assuming oversight of a dream to a work with global impact. Our gratitude must also go to Richard Snowbarger, deacon of Eastwood back then, who laboriously worked with us in every aspect of the School. Our eternal thanks must go to these men and the Eastwood church for their faithfulness to stay with us and the School through trying times and good times.

We are sincerely grateful to that host of sacrificial supporters who have made it possible for Third World preachers and church leaders to have the privilege to receive advanced Bible study materials and educational opportunities in the Bible which they would have never had a chance to obtain. It has always been our prayer that the fruit of our labors goes to the account of those who have sent us. When all of us get to heaven, we will rejoice together over the number that we were able to get there through the medium of the School.

And finally, as director and founder of the School, I want to give honor to those fellow brothers and sisters with whom we have labored in the operation of the School out of its international centers. The School could not have begun or functioned without the faithful dedication of men and women who have served on the mission field with the international centers of the School. We also thank those who worked in the Eastwood offices through the years. Thousands of hours of time have been put into accounting, newsletters, mailings, and a host of other menial jobs which are associated with sponsoring such an effort. Those who do such tasks receive too little praise for the great work they do in making a mission a success for God. Their work at home is mission work, for without it international efforts as the International School of Biblical Studies could not exist. May God richly reward their sacrifices.

It is our prayer that God receive all glory for it has been Him who has brought our feeble dreams to reality. We therefore claim no credit. May He be praised greatly for working in the lives of so many dedicated Christians.

Roger E. Dickson, D.Min.
Cape Town, South Africa
1991

A STATEMENT FROM THE PUBLISHER

It has been my privilege to print several books by Roger Dickson, most of which have dealt with mission work. **Caribbean Missionary Pilot**, an autobiography, is a continuation of that series.

Brother Dickson is a very unusual man. He has been a driving force in the Lord's Church for a number of years as a missionary, writer, and teacher. He and his family have lived and worked in Brazil, the States, and in Puerto Rico where he was a regular visitor throughout the many islands in the Caribbean region. To speed up his work schedule he became a pilot, and in this book you will read some of the many things he experienced while flying his own plane.

Caribbean Missionary Pilot also serves as a tool for relating the history of ***The International School of Biblical Studies,*** a correspondence school which was begun to enable Roger to reach more souls for Christ. The courses were designed for leadership training, to be offered to the more serious Bible student. Through this medium, thousands have been taught the truth and prepared to serve the Lord not only in the Caribbean but around the world.

Caribbean Missionary Pilot is a mission book, a history of a work, but I think as you read it you will share the excitement Roger felt as he lived the experiences. You will enjoy the adventures described, and you will be challenged by the work and the goals Roger sought to reach. I certainly want to commend the book to you with the hope that you will be inspired to greater service to God.

J. C. Choate
Winona, MS
January 9, 1995

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: *Growing Up and Go Up*
Chapter 2: *Heading God's Way*
Chapter 3: *Brazil*
Chapter 4: *The Historical People*
Chapter 5: *The Flight of Faith*
Chapter 6: *Initial Operations*
Chapter 7: *The First Extension Trip*
Chapter 8: *Business as Usual*
Chapter 9: *Learning the Territory*
Chapter 10: *For Pilots Only*
Chapter 11: *The West Indian Dilemma*
Chapter 12: *Anything Can Happen*
Chapter 13: *Restarting*
Chapter 14: *Dealing with the True Picture*
Chapter 15: *Times for Faith*
Chapter 16: *Going West*
Chapter 17: *Puerto Rico*
Chapter 18: *A Good Word for a Good Land*
Chapter 19: *Waiting on God*
Chapter 20: *The Roving Evangelist*
Chapter 21: *From Here to the Future*
Chapter 22: *The Final Picture*

An Appeal

Chapter 1

(FLIGHT TRAINING)

GROWING UP AND GO UP

"I'm sure we can do it," I confidently affirmed.

My brother James fully agreed to a preposterous suggestion. This began our Kitty-Hawk adventure to test fly a genuine bedsheet parachute. I was ten years of age at the time and my brother James was eleven. Both of us had this glorious plan of climbing up a ladder, spreading our configured bedsheet, and then ever so gently floating to the ground in ecstatic flight. At least, that was what we had fantasied.

"Ready?" he questioned.

"Yip," I eagerly replied.

Into the air we jumped. Tragedy ensued. The ladder slipped. Catastrophe followed when I knocked my delicate head against the ground. However, my brother James was not so lucky. He broke both bones in both arms and was rushed to the hospital. That ended the great parachute adventure of the Dickson brothers.

That unfortunate adventure, however, did not deter my flight dreams. Somehow in growing up on a farm in central Kansas I sprouted a wing on my heart and an adventure for height and flight that intrigued my conscious and subconscious mind. I climbed every high hill I could see, every stack of hay on the farm and every windmill. I dreamed of expanding wings into a blast of air that would gently lift my earth-bound body to the freedom of heaven-soaring birds. I never realized until years later that God was evidently preparing me for a specific work, a work He had planned. All He had to do was make the man to fit the work. But looking back on those years, I believe I made the task as hard for Him as I possibly could.

THAT FIRST FLIGHT

In my youth I always dreamed of getting into a real airplane, something that had real wings and wouldn't collapse in midair like bedsheets. My dreams were unexpectantly fulfilled one windy Kansas day when my father made a visit to the local crop duster. My father had wanted a field of Alfalfa sprayed so he sought the services of this local crop duster. Unfortunately, this good gentleman had made some previous farmer somewhat angry the week before by spraying the wrong field. It was now his established policy to go see by air the actual field to be sprayed before he did any spraying.

To my surprise we were going on a real flight to see the actual field my father wanted sprayed. So into this Cessna 172 we went. When we skipped from the grass runway of the Stafford Airport into the clear blue, excitement attached itself to every nerve of my body. The sensation was exhilarating! I just couldn't believe it was so great. I was a goner for flight.

Nevertheless, all went well until we started turning those corners in the sky on that hot Kansas summer day. Somehow, the ecstasy of my central nervous system had not communicated to my stomach to keep cool. I became miserably sick. I was just able to contain my stomach until we landed. Regardless of the abdominal misery, however, I thoroughly enjoyed the flight. I was hooked.

WEST INDIANA JONES

Youth was a daring adventure for me. My brother James and I built and executed every daredevil stunt we could dream up. Living on a farm in central Kansas presented itself as the ideal test arena for every concoction we could imagine. And we had a great imagination.

One of the hottest stunts we executed was the bicycle-fire trick. This was performed by throwing about five gallons of gasoline on the ground and then striking a match to produce a burning inferno. We would then execute a daring drive through the fire on our bicycles. We copied the idea from a country fair where we saw it done with cars. Admittedly, it was a little hotter on bicycles than cars, but it worked all the same.

We eventually graduated from bicycles and went on to a motorcycle. This resulted in more anxiety for our parents and more excitement for us. I remember racing down the road at about fifty to sixty miles-per-hour (that was as fast as this particular bike would go). It was my stunt to proceed toward the ditch at about fifty miles-an-hour. Now every ditch in Stafford County had embankments of dirt at various intervals to prevent erosion. These embankments made excellent ramps for jumping. Thus, I devised this lunatic idea of building up speed on the road, racing into the ditch, hitting the embankment, and then sailing through the air with the greatest of ease. After all, it got me into the air for a few moments of flight. And, it all went pretty well ... for a while.

One day when I eagerly acquired the normal fifty miles-per-hour speed, things did not go so well. I raced off the road into the ditch and proceeded toward an unknown embankment. The lift-off was great. The flight was even greater. Unfortunately in mid-air, I saw to my horror the end of a culvert sticking out at the threshold of my intended point of touchdown. To this day I can still vividly see that motorcycle tumbling through the air going one direction while I was on another course, in the same configuration, sailing at the same velocity through the air in another direction. I landed without one broken bone. I am sure there was some providence in that. Unfortunately, the motorcycle suffered major abrasions and fractures. This ended the motorcycle capers. That poor motorcycle had seen its day. And, I swore off motorcycles, forever.

PATIENT PARENTS

My mother and father have to go down in history as two patient parents. Somehow they survived my youth as I did. I will always be grateful to my mother for her faithful struggles as a Christian mother trying alone to rear her four children to be faithful to the Lord. Through all of the mischievous adventures of us children, she somehow managed to put us on a road that would lead us closer to Jesus. From struggling up the stairs late at night to read us the Bible after a hard day of work on the farm to dragging us off to an old church building in Stafford, she has gained her prize. Would that every child had such a mother. I will never be able to repay her for the faith of Jesus which she instilled in my heart. I pray that I can only pass it on to thousands of others through my work in our Lord's vineyard.

TRYING TO GROW UP

God had a hard time with me while I was making friends with the Devil in my youth. I ran the course of worldly living and reaped the whirlwind in every direction. Somewhere, though, I had picked up a sensitive conscience and it plagued me on every wayward step I made contrary to what my Christian teaching dictated to me. I made every effort to be a tough guy and to manifest the macho image which was so demanding of youth. My own lack of confidence and low self-esteem led me into doing those rebellious things that only destroyed myself. Would that every young man could realize the foolishness of worldly pride and come to experience the security of humbling oneself in the eyes of God.

All was going well for me in the world until things began to fall apart. In college I had the worst of roommates. I wasn't any better. It came to the point that the local law enforcement and I were at the worst of odds. It was either change or else. And for the betterment of my life, that suppressed faith my mother had instilled within me said change. And I did.

I decided to start attending regularly the Sunday assemblies of the Eastwood church of Christ in Hutchinson, Kansas. It was either the second or third time that I attended that I saw this young girl walking around who seemed to be no more than fifteen years old. I was a macho college kid so I deviously asked to take her home. To my total humiliation I discovered that night that she was nineteen years old, nine months old than me. I couldn't believe it. I even had her show me her driver's license to prove the claim. Macho college man became mucho humbled.

The name of this youthful looking charm was Martha Jane Hill. I was on my way to a continuing romance with the only girl I ever officially dated. And she became Martha Jane Dickson after a few months of courtship.

The first Sunday after our marriage, Martha and I went before the Eastwood church. We made a commitment to serve God with all our hearts. Our lives have never been the same. We have never looked back.

At that time God began preparing us together for a special work. Neither of us knew what the future held. We only knew that the Father had sent us to one another for His work which was yet in the future. We were excited about having one another. And we were excited about our rededication to serve our God. We both needed one another so much. It was December, 1966.

Chapter 2

(FILING A FLIGHT PLAN)

HEADING GOD'S WAY

I have always believe that God would watch over me. If worse came to worse I always felt that He could be relied on for getting me out of any situation. There were times I really put Him to the test in this matter when I walked in the foolishness of my own ways. And, there were times He really put me to the test by humbling me in His sight. My infant faith in His working in my life as a youth has grown to a trust that He is busy working in my environment to bring fruit to my labors and for His glory. I have always believed that the best is yet to be because He always wants the best for us. The older I get the more I can see His infinite work in my life.

I remember when Martha and I decided to be missionaries. We had a three month old child named Angella and a lot of dreams. We lived in Hutchinson, Kansas where I was still attending a junior college. Our first desire was to go to a Christian college. So we decided to make a trip to Oklahoma City to visit Oklahoma Christian College.

We had seven dollars at that time to our name and a lot of faith to make the trip to Oklahoma City and back.

Nevertheless, we just headed out, knowing that somehow we would make the 450-mile round trip. (Oh, the innocence of youthful idealism.)

We arrived in Oklahoma city in good shape, no problems, just a little more in company with the poverty strickened. We still had to figure out where we were going to spread our tents for the night. Eating would be a luxury. God did take care of us, however. The college had an extra vacant room to spare where we could sleep.

We thought we would eat a hamburger for one meal on the trip. This would still allow us enough money to buy gasoline in order to return home. It just happened again that we were eating with a friend who, to our surprise, picked up the tab. (It was one of those times when one does not make a hassle over who is going to take the check, just be thankful.)

Martha and I knew we did not have enough money to pay tuition for a Christian college. A good preacher friend of mine, Jimmy Keas, suggested that I go to a school of preaching. At the time, I had no idea what such was. But he explained that no tuition was paid by the student in order to attend these schools. The local churches that conducted these schools paid for the cost of operating the school. All that was needed from the student was living and book expenses. I thought this was a grand idea. And after looking at our banking account - we had two hundred dollars to our name -I was assured that God wanted us to attend such a school.

In the fall of 1967, I went alone to Dallas, Texas to visit the Preston Road School of Preaching. This was my first visit to the "big city." Let me assure you that it was awesome to this farm boy from Kansas. Upon arriving in Dallas, I had a long visit with Eldred Stevens, the director of the school. He was one man for whom I later developed great admiration. And he was a pilot. Therefore, there had to be something extra special about him.

DALLAS BOUND

Our only problem in going to school was money. All we needed was board and room to attend. We had managed in late fall of 1968 to save five hundred dollars. We figured that this amount would get us through several weeks of school. I could then get a job to save in order to re-enter the school. Therefore, we informed the church in Stafford, Kansas, where I grew up, that we were going to Dallas, Texas to the Preston Road School of Preaching. (In later years one of the elders there told me that at the time they did not think I would ever make a preacher.) I asked the Stafford church, as well as other churches and individuals, if they could help us financially. Considering my past life, I guess I was really asking them for a leap of faith in me.

At the time, the Stafford church was financially strapped and could not help. In fact, we received no promises of support from anyone. Nevertheless, I had enrolled in the school and somehow we were going. I was determined. Maybe it was just hard-headedness. Martha thinks that is what it was.

About two weeks before school started, Martha and I decided that we had better get our things together to make the move to Dallas. Angella was three months old and still in diapers. We didn't have any monthly support promised, but we had that five hundred dollars that would get us through for the time being.

I remember going to my last day of work at the Carey Salt Company. It was my last day on the job and I gave everyone my goodbye's. I had told them that I was going to a preaching school in order to become a preacher. Well, none of them ever believed that I would make a preacher, either. But again, I was just hard-headed about the matter. Five o'clock came that day and I finished my last day of secular work. When I arrived home, Martha informed me that my home church in Stafford and called and come to our rescue with support. The money had just happened to be made available. My sister and brother-in-law, Roger and Zina Ratzlaf, also informed us that they would help. I give thanks to God for people who have faith in unlikely preacher prespects.

I will never forget how God tested our faith in that matter until the last day. At that time it was like the Father saying, "Son, everything is going to work out. Just go." He taught me a lesson in those days that I have lived with ever since. We just go.

GETTING STARTED

God helped me do what few expected could be done with a rebellious farm boy. I graduated. When I graduated from Preston Road, Eldred Stevens told me that when I had applied to the school he thought that I would never make a preacher. "But," he added, "You have been one of my best students." Those words have always stayed with me. They were words of encouragement from one who I came to respect as one of the greatest gospel preachers of our time.

The intensity and discipline of the school taught me many things. I made it through two years of school by giving about fifteen hours a day to hard study. Martha was a true helpmate. We had a new typewriter when I enrolled. By the time I graduated, she had worn grooves in the touch-keys with her fingernails because of the long hours she dedicated to typing my scribbled notes and papers.

It was during those two years of school that I fell in love with the Word of God. Since then, I have devoted several hours a week to Bible study. God's Word is still our source of faith. In order to have the faith that is well pleasing unto God we must thoroughly saturate our minds with our Father's words.

After graduation I began preaching for a church in Gulfport, Mississippi. It was a great work. I am so thankful for the brethren there as they were so patient with me in my struggles through the first years of being a young preacher. It was a great privilege to work with T. Pierce Brown, the preacher for the Gulfport church. May God truly reward bless every church and older preacher who breaks in a young gospel preacher.

While I was preaching in Mississippi, Martha and I never gave up the dream of being missionaries. We had dreamed of such, even before attending school in Dallas. The only problem was that God had a hard time getting us out of the United States and into the mission field. Both of us had grown accustomed to the fine way of the "American Way of Life." The thought of giving up family, friends and the fine life did not appeal to either of us all that much. We had caught the American materialism and comforts of life. Nevertheless, God was working hard on us.

While we were in Gulfport I made a giant step toward another goal I always had hidden within my inner self. You guessed it. I started flying lessons. On July 9, 1970, I made my first solo flight. I had to borrow the money, but in November of that year I passed my check ride and I was on my own. I was a full-fledged pilot. I didn't know how God was going to use my flying for His glory, but I knew He was. I had worked for the pilot's license for the purpose of using it in His kingdom and I knew there was a place He could use my talents and desires to do His work.

LEARNING CAUTION

God certainly watches over our foolishness. In my early days of flying, right after I had received my license, I thought I was the first cousin of Charles Lindbergh. I remember one incedent that I will never forget.

I was still preaching in Gulfport at the time. One of the members of the Gulfport church and I wanted to make a quick trip to Florence, Alabama to attend a lectureship. We had to leave late in the afternoon for the trip in a two-seater, Cessna 150. On the day of our departure, we were off and into the air as the sun began to blink its last over the horizon. Darkness crept over us as we penetrated the skies in almost instrument conditions - no clouds, just a greenhorn pilot flying over the almost uninhibited forests of Mississippi and Alabama.

We just flew and flew that night. Everything was going well until I came to the awful conclusion that I was lost. We had been flying for over four hours. Twenty minutes back we had passed a lighted airport. What airport it was was anybody's guess. I was lost and gas was getting miserably low. My palms began to sweat and a little knot began to form in the tender part of my stomach. My passenger was off in dream land, so I suffered alone. I yearned for a bedsheet.

All I could see ahead was nothing. So I made a quick u-turn up there in the big black and headed back to the only airport I had located. I knew we were about to start flying on gas vapor any minute. The forest below just didn't seem to be very appealing at the moment. So I asked the Lord to get us down, wherever down was.

By the time we reached the airport which we had previously passed, I had almost ceased breathing; every finger was crossed and the little knot in my tender stomach had turned into a major cramp. I lined up on the runway, and relaxed a little only when I realized we were within gliding distance to touchdown. Let me tell you that it was beautiful music to my ears to hear those tires thump down on that runway.

When we landed I calmly awakened my passenger by saying, "Well, we're here." (Wherever "here" was.) But as "luck" would have it, this was the airport to which we were suppose to go in the first place. When I had the tanks fueled up, I noticed that the pump meter registered one gallon more than the airplane manual stated that was usable fuel for this plane. Well . . . how can I explain that.

Of course, my pilot's pride never allowed me to tell my innocent passenger any of this. Little did he know that his life was in such great danger. But to this day, I check my fuel tanks meticulously. I fill them up to the top every flight, no matter how short or long. And I make it a point to never get lost.

MY FIRST TRIP OUTSIDE

During the summer of 1972, about six preachers, including myself, conducted a three-and-a-half week campaign to the island of Grenada in the West Indies. This was my first venture outside the confines of my native culture of America. The purpose of the campaign was to follow-up on about 450 Bible correspondence course students who had graduated from a course sent out by the Gulf Coast churches.

I can still remember those days of anxiety in preparation for the trip. I had never been to a foreign country - except Texas - and I was excited about learning of other peoples in other lands. I was not a little adventurous.

All of us travelled down together to this land of pirates and buccaneers. We arrived at Pearl's Airport, Grenada. We then navigated a rough road that would break a snake's back across this lush island. For the first few days we stayed in St. Georges, the capitol. It was from here that my good fellow preachers decided to "send me out." Several students were in and around the area of Grenville which was on the other side of the island. There was also a young Christian by the name of Aaron who was "over there" somewhere. Therefore, they decided, with my reluctant consent, that I should take that land. This was an experience I vividly remember. Here I am, fresh out of the States, young and inexperienced.

These preaching brethren of mine rousted me out of bed at 5:00 AM. They took me to a bus station where buses, "trucks", awaited to take unsuspecting passengers on a hair-raising, roller coaster ride across the mountainous trails of Grenada. My good brethren said, "Go to Grenville and start a church over there." So, I went. I had two weeks to contact about fifty students. I was too young to believe it couldn't be done. So, I caught the truck-bus and made my way across the island in hope of starting a church from zero.

God can do marvelous things with our feeble inexperience. I went to Grenville and preached alone in the market place and street corners. I preached in front of stores and factories in the day time and in the night with only the light of the moon. I preached in huts and houses alike. All I knew to do was to stand up and preach and teach house to house. At the end of two weeks over twenty in the area of Grenville had been baptized. The church was established or re-established and to this day it is still faithfully meeting.

During the entire campaign, eighty-six precious souls were added to the church. I was thrilled by the tremendous receptivity of the people. Their desire to listen and study God's Word overwhelmed me. I was hooked. I felt it was somehow wrong to allow such thirsting for the truth to go unquenched. I wondered why few preachers of the gospel in the States did not realize this great hungering for the gospel in these lands. It was during this first contact with the great receptivity of mission areas that I decided that I must do my part to evangelize the world.

I returned from Grenada with a deeper commitment to allow God to use me in taking the gospel to the world. I believe this one trip brought be into contact with reality. That reality was the fact that no man has a right to hear the gospel twice when there are millions who have never had the opportunity to hear it just once. That burden was placed upon my heart in Grenada. And today, I thank the people of Grenada for opening my heart to see their spiritual needs. This spice island of the Caribbean will always be a precious reminder to me that there are millions in the world who will obey if they can only have the chance to hear. It is my prayer that every evangelist will have a Grenada experience. Such an experience will change the life of those who are deeply committed to the saving of souls.

Chapter 3

(GROUND SCHOOL)

BRAZIL

We had been living on the Mississippi Gulf Coast for four years when God called us to Brazil. Martha was comfortable there. So was I. But there lingered in our hearts the desire to launch out into the cutting edge of the kingdom to some land where receptivity was great and challenges were many. And on top of all this, the Grenada experience had changed me. The longer I stayed in the local U.S. preaching environment the harder it was becoming for me to make a commitment to those who had never had an opportunity to hear the name of Jesus.

Materialism is a deadly trap for the American evangelist. I liked the "things" of America. I always thought the materialist was the one living in the next financial bracket above me. I had forgotten that there is always someone living in the next financial bracket **below** me who thought that I was materialistic. But we had to go. People were hungering and thirsting after the truth.

According to recent statistics, there are still an estimated **one billion** people in the world who have never heard of the name Jesus. That burden has always been on my shoulders. I have never wanted to stand before the judgment seat of the Father without ever having given it my best shot to let my generation here on earth in some way to hear the gospel of Jesus.

However, I fought against God in Gulfport. Unlike Jacob, though, He won and I went. In Lubbock, Texas I had contacted Ellis Long, a long-time veteran missionary of Brazil. At that time, the Sao Paulo Mission Team was in the process of recruiting five families to take the place of team members who were returning to the States after many years in Brazil. Martha and I made a decision. We decided on Brazil.

My heart goes out to every first-time missionary. We contacted over sixty churches in order to raise our necessary support to go. It was a nine-month struggle that tested our faith and led us to question the faith of some who had no desire whatsoever to support any foreign mission efforts. Fundraising for missions is one of those things one must struggle through and struggle not to become bitter or cynical. One must remember that it is God who calls evangelists and not the church. When one feels that it is God's will that he be an evangelist, then he will usually persevere until he goes. If one feels that it is the church's responsibility to send him, then he might have some trouble with himself if the church continues to refuse to send.

In the summer of 1974 we had four beautiful children. Angella was six. Matthew was three. Cindy was one and a half. Lisa still had dripping diapers at six months. In fact, both Cindy and Lisa were still in diapers. And Matthew was still having accidents in the matter.

Back in those days we didn't know what a survey trip was. We just figured that if one didn't have enough faith to up and move he didn't have enough faith to make it on the field. So, we just went. Of course, that missiology isn't always true. Many would-be missionaries have just up and moved and then after being on the field for only a few months have just up and moved back home. Nevertheless, we packed up our few belongings in crates in Gulfport and shipped them out of New Orleans. We shipped them about a month before we left in order to receive them around the time we arrived. We were dreaming.

I can today look back at the flight we made to Sao Paulo and still have nightmares, wondering how we ever did it. We left Gulfport and flew all day and all night. In between we sat in airport terminals trying to comfort four little angels who could not figure out what was going on in their lives. I can honestly say without any doubt, that it was the most miserable trip Martha and I have ever made. Before we left, the doctor gave us some red looking snake oil for the children. It was supposed to make them sleep in the plane. It didn't. It made them just sleepy enough to be cranky. And they cried all the way to Brazil. That was the trip that neither Martha nor I will ever forget.

GETTING TO WORK

We arrived in Brazil on September 3, 1974. The first lesson we learned was to do without what we thought were vital household articles. The goods we had shipped in August did not arrive until December of that year. However, it was like Christmas when we finally received the few household goods we had sent. Nevertheless, we learned a big lesson with the experience. As Americans we usually surround ourselves with a great host of material possessions, thinking that all are necessary for the functions of life. Our security must never be placed in such. And I am sure that most of us would learn to live without all our trinkets if they were taken away from us.

Brazil was a learning experience in every way. Martha and I had studied some Portuguese before we left the States. I took special classes in Portuguese those first few months after we arrived. Martha took classes on the streets and in the market places. It was hard learning this new language. Nevertheless, after about nine struggling months I was able to stumble through my first Portuguese sermon. I do not know how my audience survived. They just sat there and put on a good act as if they understood this chap who sweated it out for thirty minutes. Fortunately, the Brazilian brothers and sisters were exceptionally patient with anyone who was trying to learn their language. They gave me an extra helping of patience and I needed it all.

Brazilian culture in Sao Paulo was similar in many ways to the American culture. After our first months of acculturation, we felt more at ease in the overwhelming size of the city of Sao Paulo. I must confess, however, that at first the size of the city unnerved me. I thought, "What is a small-town country boy like me doing in a place like this?"

BIG CITY, BIG COUNTRY

Brazil is big. It is larger than the continental United States, excluding Alaska. Sao Paulo was big. When we first arrived, we stayed in a hotel in the middle of the city, right on the main street of downtown Sao Paulo. Can you imagine what these two small town country people felt like in the middle of a city of over ten million? I want to tell you that Martha and I were in a daze for those first few weeks. We will always be grateful to members of the Sao Paulo Mission Team who were on the field at that time. Ken and Liz Lewis were especially helpful. We stayed in their house for one month after arrival while they were in the States on furlough. It was in the winter. I can still remember the six of us huddled on the sofa wrapped in a blanket. We watched Daniel Boone on TV speaking Portuguese. Ken and Liz were in the States, so we suffered alone. Those were the days for adjustment.

After the initial shock of the big city and the new culture, however, we grew to love the city of Sao Paulo. But I must confess that I never grew to love the horrendous smog and challenging traffic. I could have gone without both of these obstacles to human survival.

Now speaking of smog, it was bad in this city. There were some days when you would become nauseated if you had to walk around downtown for one hour or two. When you would come home at night, there would be black stains around the collar and cuffs of your shirt. You can imagine what some people's lungs looked like after living in this environment for twenty years.

Each day in the traffic was an adventure. There are only two types of pedestrians in Sao Paulo, the quick and the dead. My Portuguese teacher which I had in the States was a Brazilian and had grown up in Rio de Janeiro. Before we moved to Brazil she said, "In Rio when a car hits a man, they tell the car driver to go on. The police will clean up the mess." That may be a little exaggerated, but I do believe the pedestrian does not always have the right-of-way in most Brazilian cities. Some believed that if the pedestrian was crazy enough to step out into the traffic, he deserved to get hit.

One of the best school situations our children have enjoyed in our foreign living was the school they attended in Brazil. Angella and Matthew were old enough to attend an English-speaking school which was run by the Baptist church. When Cindy as old enough to go to school, she attended a small Brazilian school near our house. She was able to do so for one year before we left Brazil.

Sao Paulo had everything to offer when it came to modern living. All you had to do was pay the price. One of the great shopping advantages was the markets that set up operation in the street two days a week near our house. Almost all of our food could be purchased at these "portable markets." And Brazil had food. I gained fifteen pounds my first year in Brazil.

One of the advantages of working in Brazil was the right to use an amateur radio. About six months before we moved to Brazil, I had studied for and eventually passed the test to receive a ham radio license. In Sao

Paulo, I was on the air almost every Thursday with phone patches back to the States. We made calls for team members who wanted to talk to family, friends and churches. It was and is a great tool in missions.

TEAM EVANGELISM

I have always been independent natured. That's the farmer in me. There are cursings and blessings in missions with such a nature, primarily blessings. After several years on the field, most missionaries become independent natured because of the nature of their work. As leaders in an infant church, they usually have no peers. This is especially true in the first years of their work. Therefore, they have to be able to stand alone. They must have a great faith in God who stands with them at the front in leading church movements to victory.

In Sao Paulo I had the privilege of working with fourteen other men in a close team work. It was a great experience for me. Those first years of mission work I needed the company and experience of seasoned missionaries. God provided it through the team effort. I would advise any young family to first go to the mission field with a team. Either go as a team or go to a team. Such will spare one countless futilities.

(I have always been impressed with team work. My brother James and I always worked together in growing up on the farm. I remember one time when we salvaged an old engine which had been discarded in a grove of trees about ten years before. We had the ambitious goal of getting the rusty old junker running. Neither of us knew much about engines at the time. I believe he was about fifteen and I was thirteen. However, our optimistic ambitious attitudes about machines would not allow us to be deterred from getting this engine running. After about two weeks of struggle in trying to get it going, I was ready to throw in the wrench. I was discouraged. My brother James was more than willing to buy me out. So, I sold out my share for twenty-five cents. The next day he got the engine running. I felt like I had sold my birthright.)

WORK EXPERIENCES

One of the things that lured me to Brazil was a Cessna 206 airplane. The plane had been purchased to do follow-up work for the radio broadcasting that was going on in Brazil at that time. Carl Henderson was the pilot. He was one of the best pilots for the bush that I have known. And that Cessna 206 was like a truck. It would haul anything that could be squeezed in.

Carl had been working with churches in the interior of Brazil. This was really my first experience with discipleship training by extension. And these were the times when I first began to think in the area of **extension training.** Back then, we were all learning the how to's. Extension training was a new concept of church growth that was introduced to us by Ed Matthews who came down in 1977 and delivered a week long seminar to all of us on the subject. Ed had been travelling around the world under the oversight of a church just to teach this concept of leadership training. His work was to educate missionaries on extension training by use of programmed materials. Little did he know that brief seminar he gave in Sao Paulo would change the course of my life and lead to the establishment of the **International School of Biblical Studies.**

Because of the vast territory of Brazil, it was difficult for us to systematically begin an organized extension school effort outside Sao Paulo. In those days we had not considered a "full" extension program by use of programmed course. (By "full" I mean the exclusive use of programmed materials without the periodic visits by the teacher.) It is sometimes amazing how an idea so simple can be so far away. With the concept we had of extension training in Brazil at that time it would have been impossible for us to incorporate an extension work that would cover the entire country. Nevertheless, we did make an effort to bring Brazilian leaders into Sao Paulo for a week and two-week long study sessions at our Bible camp. At the time we were still shackled with the belief that the teacher must see the student. It would not be until many years later that full extension by correspondence would be developed.

AVIATION MISSIONS IN BRAZIL

Mission Aviation Fellowship, an interdenominational group dedicated to the mobilization of missionaries by aircraft, was operating about fifteen airplanes in Brazil at the time Martha and I were there. We had one. Not bad odds, fifteen to one.

It was also in Brazil when I began to realize the great need for literature for church leaders who were struggling to nourish isolated churches in the interior of Brazil.. Carl did a good work in distributing as much material as we could print. I did some writing to fulfill some special needs. I suppose it was in Brazil that I determined to write in order to help Third World preachers and teachers to feed national churches. At least it was there when I did a lot of writing and printing for the churches. I did so much writing at certain times that I was using up one Bic ballpoint pen a week in producing materials. That's a lot of writing.

MISSION TRIPS

Working out of Sao Paulo was like trying to evangelize the continental United States from New York. Bible correspondence courses were an effective means of teaching the 210 million population which was scattered over this vast expanse of earth. Several pockets of BCC students developed in different areas. One case was Salvador, a city of two and a half million. Over five hundred had graduated from our course in this city which had not one church.

Four of us missionaries (Carl Henderson, Glover Shipp, Bill Sweeten and myself) decided to make a trip to Salvador and Recife in order to do some follow-up work on these students. It was an eight-hour flying trip from Sao Paulo to Salvador.

Carl and I left Sao Paulo and flew over to Bello Horizonte where we picked up Glover and Bill. From there we flew four hours northeast to the east coast of Brazil. The weather became less than satisfactory and we were forced to land at a small coastal city call Ilheus.

When we first landed we could smell something that was familiar, but we could not identify exactly what the smell was. Everywhere we went in the city there was the same smell. It wasn't until we went to a local ice cream parlor to do our normal thing - eat ice cream - that we determined the source of the smell. We ordered chocolate ice cream and finally discovered the smell. It was pure chocolate from the farms of the community.

At the turn of the century Ilheus was the chocolate capitol of the world. Much was still produced there. I figure myself a pretty good taster of ice cream. I want to give my testimony that that was the best chocolate ice cream I have ever eaten in the world. I know three other men who would witness to that fact. During the evening we were there we went back at least three times for chocolate ice cream.

After we forced ourselves out of chocolate city, we continued our flight to Salvador the next morning. Carl and Glover dropped Bill and me off in Salvador. They went on to Recife. Bill had been in Brazil only a few months, so his Portuguese was a little less than adequate. So there we were in the middle of two and a half million people with a list of about five hundred BCC contacts. That was a frustrating week for both of us.

Again, back in those days we never dreamed of first sending a letter to all these students in order to invite them to meet with us at a particular hotel. Such is the method of many World Bible School efforts throughout the world today. What we did was traipse around Salvador after the students. Sometimes a simple idea is never conceived because of non-experience or lack of models. I believe such experience should at least tell young prospective missionaries to get training **before** they go to the field. Such training with save countless months and years of education in the school of hard knocks.

One of the highlights of that week in Salvador was our contact with a man who had received and read our material on New Testament Christianity. He had baptized about thirty-five people and started a small church on his own outside Salvador. When we arrived, they had constructed their own building and were meeting regularly. Numerous cases as this occurred in Brazil. Such only proved to me the power of the printed page in evangelizing vast areas of population. Such also planted seeds in my mind concerning the tremendous need for a continued educational program for these isolated church leaders. How could we take them on to advanced training, on to material which was beyond Bible correspondence course material?

Another experience of that trip also formed an impression on my mind. We were on our way back to Belo Horizonte and had been flying for about five hours. The weather became increasingly worse as we neared Belo. We were flying up this valley about ten miles out of Belo. The mountains reached into the clouds and we could not find the slightest hole through which to make it over the mountains and into Belo. Fuel was getting miserable low. (I remembered a former experience.) The only airport was about thirty minutes back to Governador Valadores.

After determining that the valley in which we were flying around had no opening at the other end, we turned around and head for Governador Valadores. It was sure quiet in that plane. We had been flying for over five hours and we were low on fuel. That thirty minutes seemed like a day. But as the sun sat lazily over the western horizon, we sat that plane safely down at the airport. It was a good sensation to feel those wheels hit terra firma. Don't ask how much fuel we had left in the tanks.

STAYING HEALTHY

In the States, children would come home from school and say, "Mama, so-and-so has the measles, or chicken pox or flu." In Brazil our children would come home and say, "Mama, so-and-so has hepatitis, or meningitis, or scarlet fever." At times, our children brought these diseases home with them.

It seemed that every year there was an outbreak of meningitis in Sao Paulo. One particular year was pretty severe, so the city decided to inoculate as many as they could in a week. Inoculation centers were set up all over the city. Groves of people three and four blocks long filtered through the line of vaccination guns that pumped everyone full of juice. We were six of the over there million who were vaccinated in one week.

Angella came down with hepatitis and had to stay in bed four weeks. The rest of us got by with taking injections three days straight in order that we not be invaded by the hepatitis bug.

Martha and I wanted to make a short five-hour trip to a city called Migulapolis. The small city was north of Sao Paulo and rested in the beautiful plains of a farming area. I loved the farming community of Brazil and thus decided to keep my children in some way associate with the roots of farm life. On the journey up, Angella did not feel all that well. After a day there, we found out why. She had scarlet fever. So it was back home and back to bed for Angella.

FULFILLING A GOAL

One of the most exciting works in the kingdom is the training of preachers. I had always wanted to do such in a school of preaching atmosphere in the States. That opportunity came in 1978 while we were in Brazil. The White's Ferry Road church of Christ in West Monroe, Louisiana, about which we had heard much and knew little, offered us the opportunity of coming to work with them as a missionary in residence. We would have the challenge of teaching both Bible and missions. I leaped at the opportunity. This was one of those opportunities I thought would come around only once in a lifetime. And I reasoned that this is where I should be.

Martha and I loved living in Sao Paulo. It was a great city and we had an enjoyable work there. I sometimes look back and feel that we could have stayed there the rest of our lives. But at the time we felt that God was working in our lives with an opportunity to assist in encouraging others to become missionaries. However, as I look back through the eyes of faith, He was taking us on to the development of something that would fulfill the tremendous need in world evangelism. We had the concept of extension training, but the dream was only a seed that began to germinate in that last year we were in Brazil.

WEST MONROE, LOUISIANA

This was one of those places where we lived that we could never really get out of our blood. Here are a great bunch of Christians who can dream and see visions of great works to be done in the Lord's kingdom. Martha and I fell in love with this church of people. We have always appreciated working with them through the years.

After about six months in West Monroe, we began to feel the need of getting back to the training of leaders to evangelize their own people. The seeds of extension training which were planted in Brazil began to sprout. In conjunction with this, the White's Ferry Road church was interested in the West Indies. I cannot but help believe that God brought us to this church for the purpose of getting started that which is now called the International School of Biblical Studies. Therefore, it was while we were at White's Ferry Road that the **West Indies Extension**

School of Biblical Studies was born.

One of my tasks in West Monroe was to organize a mission team from the students of the School of Biblical Studies. I needed to also recruit two staff members to work with the West Indies Extension School. All of this was a challenging task, but in about one year the team had solidified and we were making definite plans to move to St. Maarten in the West Indies to begin the School.

Before this team went to the field, I thought it would be good to take them and a few other students on a campaign to the island of Dominica in the West Indies. This would be a good survey trip and would break them in to foreign culture. It would also give them an opportunity to work together as a team. We made this trip in the summer of 1979.

I can look back now and wonder what I must have been like on that first trip I made to Grenada in 1972. There is something about "first timers" that is right down funny. They notice all the foul smells, cringe from the dirty sights and prissy around the open sewers. I suppose that if anyone is considering mission work in the Third World, he or she should make a survey trip there first. I have always believed, however, that a survey trip should be made for the purpose of determining what you need in order to get the job done where you are going. If you go on a survey trip to see if you can live there, you best not be thinking about foreign living. I can assure you that you will always find a host of things that will discourage you from living in a Third World environment. Save the brotherhood some money and find your nitch somewhere in your own culture.

I have come to believe that it is harder to recruit missionaries today than it was two or three decades ago when Americans struggled to grow up in the thirties, forties and fifties. Somehow the "carpet kids" of our generation find it repugnant to condescend to men of lower estate in the poverty-stricken environment of the Third World.

I have to give credit to one young man who went on the campaign with us to Dominica. The first night we were in Roseau, he was eating at the table with us. He picked up a piece of bread, chewed into it and then looked at what he was eating. Ants had made a home in the bread and he had just eaten into their home. Afraid to let the ladies know what he had done, he put the bread in his hand under the table and kept on chewing. He would have made a good missionary.

BACK TO THE CUTTING EDGE

We spent two years in the States in West Monroe. We organized a mission team, bought an airplane, and raised all necessary funds for the beginning of what became our greatest work in the Lord's vineyard to that date. Our destination was set. We were going to St. Maarten. But complications in getting visas would not allow us to move to St. Maarten. Therefore, the central location for the base of the School was made in Antigua. We were on our way and excited about the work. Besides our family, the mission team was composed of Leslie and Christy Jones with their two daughters Dana and Catina.

Jim and Julie Crisp, Jim and Kim Allen and Rex and Dede Long were also members of the team. Leslie, Jim and I would work primarily with the School outreach.

Chapter 4

(AIRPORT OF DESTINATION: WEST INDIES)

THE HISTORICAL PEOPLE

It was the third of August. There were three ships and a daring crew who was willing to chance the elements and the ocean. Their young, eager captain and leader of this never-to-be-forgotten expedition was the son of an Italian weaver and wool merchant. In his early years, when he was only fourteen or fifteen, he had joined the crew of a ship and adventurously set off to sail the seven seas. He travelled the coast of Africa, along the Mediterranean and across the treacherous North Sea of Europe. At one time, he was shipwrecked off the coast of Portugal. But luckily, he was able to fatefully cling to a floating timber of the doomed ship and make his way safely to shore. This daring young sailor quickly learned the seas and respected their dangers.

Yes, the young man in command of this historical August third expedition was no novice seaman. He was experienced in the dangerous perils of the unforgiving sea. And he was about to set out on a perilous adventure that would tax both man and ship against the restless waves of the deep. He was on this day about to lead three small ships and their brave crews into one of the most challenging adventures of history. The year was 1492. The Captain was Christopher Columbus. And the three ships were the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria. The government that was going to finance this bazaar trip was Spain; everyone else thought Columbus was crazy.

It was on August 3, 1492 that Columbus set sail from Palos Harbour near Cadiz, Spain. After stopping in the Canary Islands to do some minor ship repairs, he set out into the unknown west where the sun had secretly hidden every night since the beginning of time. To their knowledge, no known sailor of their day had been where they were daring to go. Many were fearful of this uncharted ocean where they believed strange monsters existed and where giant whirlpools consumed both men and ships. Nevertheless, Columbus and his crew set a determined heading on a course to what would eventually unlock the Western Hemisphere for modern man.

After sixty weary days at sea without sight of one grain of land, the restless crew became violent and rebellious. They demanded that the ships turn back. But Columbus's skillful captaincy convinced them that they were near land. He promised that if they did not spot land soon they would turn back.

It was on October 11th that the cry came, "*Tierra! Tierra!*" Land had been spotted from the Pinta. When Columbus and his men set foot on the sandy beaches of this new land, the pages of modern history began to be written for the Caribbean. Little did the friendly **Arawak** Indians know that their greetings to these strange men with large ships would lead to the destruction of their people.

The peaceful island where Columbus first landed was called **Guanahani.** (It is disputed as to what island this is of the Bahama chain. Traditionally, the island of **San Salvador** has been accepted as the correct island.)

It was on this October day that history changed. From this day forward the reconstruction of the Caribbean would begin and last for centuries to come.

WRONG INDIES

Columbus thought that he had made it all the way around the world to India, even unto China. So he called these new peoples "Indians." Now you know where we get the term "Indian." Mr. Columbus thought he had sailed around the world and reached the western part of what was then called the Indies (Modern-day Indonesia and surrounding islands). Therefore, he called these new lands the "West Indies." We live with this mistake of navigation even to this day. Columbus really landed on an island of the Bahamas. Sorry, it wasn't the United States. Columbus never saw the mainland of the United States.

It wasn't until seamen landed in Guadeloupe that Europeans came into contact with a second group of Indians, the **Caribs,** which resided in the Caribbean islands. Unlike the Arawaks, the Caribs were warlike. They called themselves "*Karina*" or "*Kalinago.*" However, the Spaniards called them *carabales*. When the sailors first went ashore in Guadeloupe they wondered what was cookin' when they saw human begins being cooked and lying out to dry. Thus, it is from the name of these Indians that we get our

English word "**cannibal**", or "eaters of human flesh."

NEW NAME FOR A NEW LAND

Between 1492 and 1503 a man by the name of **Amerigo Vespucci** explored the coasts of present-day Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. In 1507, a map maker labeled this new area "**America**" after Mr. Vespucci. Map makers eventually used this name to refer to South America. South America, therefore, has greater claim to the term "American" than North America. And many Latins feel strongly about it, too.

THE WEST INDIAN TRAGEDY

Columbus made four trips to the Caribbean. His trips opened up this new land for Spain, but all Spain wanted was gold. Everything was exploited to get gold in order to support their military campaigns throughout Europe. The Indians were only a means through which they could get the gold. The Arawaks were submitted to cruel slavery in order to mine the Spaniard's yellow god. Lennox Honychurch, in his book, *The Caribbean People,* wrote,

> "The colonists were so thirsty for gold that many Indians began to believe the Spaniards' god was really gold itself. It seemed that they would do anything to get it. The Indian tribes of the Greater Antilles suffered untold hardship under the Spaniards, and before the fifteenth century was over so many thousands had died that Spain began looking for a new source of labor."

Arawak slavery was the Spaniards' method for gold acquisition. But under the vigorous labor demanded of them as slaves, the Arawaks began to die out rapidly. According to many historians, one -third of the nationals of Hispaniola (the island of the Dominican Republic and Haiti) were dead by 1497. It was estimated that Hispaniola had a population of 1,130,000 Indians when it was discovered. By 1518, one historian of that day wrote, "*Today there number does not exceed 11,000. And judging by what has happened, there will be none left in three to four years time unless some remedy is applied.*" Nothing was done for the Arawaks in Hispaniola. As a result, here is one civilization that vanished from history.

To replace the diminishing Indian population, the great slave trade routes began to bring in thousands of slaves from the west coast of Africa. Goods were brought from Europe to be traded to ruling African chiefs who stole or captured enemy tribesmen who were traded to the European slave traders. In 1790 alone, it is estimated that the English brought 38,000 slaves to the New World. The French brought 20,000, the Portuguese, 10,000 and the Dutch, 4,000. This is how the typical, present-day West Indian's ancestors arrived in the Caribbean. Exploitation brought them to these islands. And exploitation kept them there.

WHERE HISTORY WAS MADE

Historians would agree that the most active area in the world in the 1500's and 1600's, as far as history is concerned, was the Caribbean. The Spaniards laid claim to the land. Exploration was opened up into Central and South America and Mexico. Gold from Peru and the west coast of South America made its way across Panama and into the hulls of Spanish galleons which set sail through what became known as the Spanish Main. It was then taken across the Atlantic to coffers in Spain.

Men like Francis Drake, John Hawkins and Sir Walter Raleigh gained their fame in the colonial struggles which took place in the Caribbean. There were also ruthless pirates like Bluebeard and Blackbeard who lurched in countless cays in the Virgin Islands and Bahamas, patiently waiting for gold-laden ships bound for Spain. The looting pirates took their share. The unpredictable elements also took their toll of overladen ships. Hurricanes smashed overloaded and fragile ships against rocks and reefs; their unfortunate crews and valuable treasures being lost beneath the deep. These treasures were laid to rest in comfortable seabed places awaiting discovery by some modern-day treasure seeker. There are those who have certainly struck it rich by finding some long, sunken Spanish galleon. But remember, the number of the lucky are few.

The French, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish and English all had their power struggles in the making of this New World. Today, centuries later, cultures still suffer from some old wounds inflicted by treasure seeking *conquistadors* of yesteryear. Scars remain in the cultures of people who have been exploited for centuries. A whole civilization of Indians were erased to make room for a new imported civilization from Africa. The French, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese and English were the cultural surgeons of this great sociological transplant. Their culture still lingers on in the wake of their materialistic wave of social interchange.

What the colonials left was a used and deserted people. In the West Indies, however, rests a people that has weathered the storm of social abuse and change. Though torn from friends, families and cultures of Africa, they have created for themselves a new culture, a culture which takes some of the best of the many that have affected them for centuries. The West Indian people are a unique people because they have a most unusual history, a history different from any in the world. And as they struggle to release themselves from past colonialism in order to determine their own future, we must stand back and be amazed at their desires and determination.

It was this culture and these peoples that stimulated our interest over a decade ago. And it was because of this interest that I loaded my family into a small plane on August 30th of 1980 to make our voyage to this New World. Columbus knew not where he was headed. In a similar sense, neither did we. But we had God on our side and that made all the difference in the world. We walked by faith. And to some extent, it was a blind faith, for we had never before done what we were about to do. But faith grows when it is stretched. On this day of August, we were stretching it to a high pitched tone.

THE TASK BEFORE US

One of the first missionaries of the church of Christ to go to the Caribbean, south of Cuba, was Ralph Wharton. He went to St. Vincent in July, 1965. Brother Wharton wrote and sent out a Bible correspondence course to most of the islands. It was from the results of this initial work that sparks of interest and conversions sprang up throughout the area.

By 1980, there were small struggling churches in almost all of the islands. There was essentially no leadership training taking place locally among the churches. Many churches were not growing at all. Those who were growing were going at a snails pace. It was in recognition of this that we chose the West Indian scene as a target for the training and motivating of national church leaders to evangelize their own people. This was the beginning of the International School of Biblical Studies.

Chapter 5

(CLIMBING OUT TO ALTITUDE)

THE FLIGHT OF FAITH

We were at 7,500 feet. America the beautiful had just disappeared behind us. All we could see before us was a vast, empty panorama of open water, just water. It was the Atlantic Ocean. It looked spectacular. Admittedly, I felt a small lump in my throat as I silently thought, "Am I really doing this?" I wanted to kiss the life raft and life vests I had brought for myself, Martha and our four children who were quietly seated in the back of our single-engined, 260B Piper Comanche (N8856P). The $950 I paid for the life raft felt like only pennies at this particular moment of uncertainty. I had left the bedsheet and put my trust in over-water survival gear.

Amidst all the anxiety, however, I knew we were launching out into a new world, a new adventure, a new challenge. We were venturing into a land where visions meet reality, a place were dreams come true. God had brought us through two years of dreams and plans to Miami, Florida and this day of journey. Our departure from Miami on that never-to-be-forgotten September 4, 1980 seemed like destiny in the making. And when that last bit of rubber from the landing gear lifted off the Opa

Locka Airport, Miami, I felt the surging challenge of what God had providentially made possible for us in the West Indies. It was a work . . . no . . . a real dream come true.

A thousand questions rushed through my mind concerning the unknown before us. Sure, Martha and I had previously visited four of the West Indian islands on a survey trip when we returned from Brazil on furlough. But neither of us had ever thought that we would someday be making our way to this portion of God's creation in a small single-engined airplane. Well, we were on this day. And for Grand Turk, our first stop on the trip, we were headed.

In my planning, Grand Turk had always been just a small dot on a flight chart. On this day, I hoped it would actually be there when we arrived. This was our first leg to the establishment of what we called at the time the **West Indies Extension School of Biblical Studies.** I wanted everything to go right. I had offered no few prayers for this great work. (I will explain the work in chapter 6.)

FLIGHT INTO THE UNKNOWN

To say the least, I was very apprehensive about this flight. You will never understand the security in having radio contact with civilization on earth when all you can see for miles in any direction around you is water. I was a fresh pilot to over-water flying and I thanked the Lord every time I climbed in N8856P for the new radio a good brother bought for us before we left the States. It worked great and kept us in contact with mankind while we flew over those lonely waters of the West Indies. I would learn later that these waters would be a joy to navigate. It became a joy to be there, out over the crystal green and blue waters, gazing into the bright orange and yellow sunsets that peak over the horizon every evening. But this first day was different.

"Nassau, this is Comanche N8856P," I anxiously called into the mike. No reply. I called again, but still no reply. "Am I lost? Does my radio work? Can't anybody hear me!" A thousand questions went through my mind. I was anxious. You would be surprised what the mind of an anxious pilot conjures up when things aren't going right.

Again, with forced calmness I said, "Nassau, this is Comanche N8856P. **Do you copy?**"

It was like being shot with a tranquilizer gun - I guess it was, for I have never been so shot - when the reply came, "Comanche N8856P, this is Nassau."

I looked back at Martha like a 747 pilot, and thought, "I told you so." She relaxed a thousand muscles. Of course, I would never tell her the thunderstorm of anxiety that was going on in my mind. This type of trip was a first for all of us. Not just any pilot would load his wife and four children into a small plane and head across an ocean. Better yet, not many wives would let a pilot do such a thing in the first place. But Martha was a trusting wife. And we both believed that good works for God are worth the risk. It was Paul who said, "*What do you mean* *by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*" (Acts 21:13).

THE DEVIL'S TRIANGLE

Then there was also the "Bermuda Triangle" the Devil's Triangle they call it. We were in it on this eventful day. That haunting feeling was sweeping into my anxious mind that we might be zapped by some mysterious force which was silently lurking in the depths of these forbidden waters. Or maybe there were goblins out there secretly waiting to sneak there cool claws around intruders who ventured into their guarded domain. Back home there were those good-meaning friends who had been saturated with bunk about the Devil's Triangle. When we said we would be flying through the Triangle, their eyes widened to silver dollars. All caution was given that we slither not into some twilight zone to a never-never land of no return. I logically perceived that all such talk was foolishness, but still there was that thought that . . . well . . . forget it.

THE STORM

There was one of those possible goblins out there on this day, a tropical storm which I had been nervously watching for the last two days. We were flying to the south of this big demon, but we could still cast our eyes upon the gigantic thunderheads whose tops reached even unto heaven. The storm had already passed to the north of us so there was not much to worry about.

Someone asked me before we left the States what we would do if a hurricane came through Antigua where we were planning to live. I just said, "Take a quick vacation." I wasn't going to have the airplane of our sacrifices wrapped around some coconut tree. But the hurricanes never came. The weather disturbances were usually Tropical Depressions or Tropical Storms when they were in the islands. They turned into hurricanes only when they moved into the Caribbean Sea or Gulf of Mexico.

THE GREAT SQUEEZE

To say the least, all six of us were cramped into our small airplane. However, we had it worked out. The two small children, Cindy and Lisa, sat in the back on a trunk packed full of clothes. Martha and Matthew sat in the middle two seats. My oldest daughter, Angella, sat in the right front seat. There were bits of goods packed everywhere in between. We had a plane full of bodies and bags.

We had ninety gallons of fuel on board. At about fifty-five percent power on the engine, we had a little over seven hours of flight time. My bladder, however, didn't have that much endurance. (I stayed in the Comanche six hours and fifteen minutes on a direct non-stop trip from the east coast to Monroe, Louisiana one time. That was long enough for me.)

GRAND TURK

It was exciting to myself and my children - Martha didn't say much - to see each island of the Bahamas as we passed over them. For me each one seemed like a haven of security as we flew the great lengths of water between them. The children thought about their uniqueness. I looked for drug smugglers in every secret cay. (This was the interstate highway for drug smugglers into the States.) Martha, though, was maintaining radio silence, trying to catch a wink of sleep here and there in an effort to forget that we were really there. She and the children had popped a few dramamine tablets before we left. The pills helped them with air sickness. I think Martha took them because they made her sleep. I also think she wanted to do a lot of sleeping on this particular trip. At the time, I couldn't figure out why; I just kept on flying.

"How far to Grand Turk?" Martha muttered.

"About forty-five more minutes," I confidently affirmed.

We had been flying for four hours since we left Miami. Our bladders were at capacity. It was a long forty-five minutes, but there it was at last. It was flat, little and just great. We would have taken anything at the time, just so it had a bathroom. When we finally touched down on Grand Turk and rolled to a stop at the terminal building, six aching people jumped out of the airplane and headed straight for the bathroom. I am sure those standing around had seen this sight before, since Grand Turk was a common stopping off point for small aircraft flying to and from the Caribbean islands.

We planned to stay one night in Grand Turk and fly on to Antigua the next day. When we started to pay the exorbitant prices, we were glad to leave this expensive little island. Taxi from the airport to the hotel - about four minutes - twelve dollars. In those days, that was unreal. When we left, Martha took the taxi with the luggage back to the airport. It cost her three dollars. The children and I had a nice little walk. The hotel was forty-five dollars a night. Not too bad. We were all thirsty when we arrived so we decided to have a coke each. The waiter brought the bill for the cokes and I almost had a crash landing.

"Six dollars and fifty cents," I laughed. (I had to laugh or I would have cried. We had just left the States where a coke was thirty-five cents. Here they were over one dollar each.) The young lady who was waiting on us just said, "I'm sorry." Somehow, that helped as I forked over the bounty for the six cokes. Of course, we came to accept such outlandish prices for such things in resort areas of the Caribbean. We learned to stay away from these areas. Actually, one can travel relatively inexpensively in the Caribbean if he is willing to go without air-conditioning and carpets and those other nice things that have spoiled Americans so much.

HELLO, ST. THOMAS

We took what money we had left, boarded "Dickson Airways" and escaped from Grand Turk. Our next destination was St. Thomas, one of the United States virgin islands. This was the part of the entire journey I did not particularly like. It was a flight over 350 miles of open water from Grand Turk to Puerto Rico. I would have to use the ADF (Automatic Directional Finder) almost all the way for navigation. (This is the most difficult electronical navigational instrument in an airplane by which to navigate. It is a lifesaver, though, to those who can proficiently use it. I have since come to appreciate it more than any of the other navigational instruments in an airplane when flying over water. In the West Indies, one cannot do without it. It is the primary navigational instrument in the West Indies. I had two in my airplane.)

Before departure from Grand Turk, Martha and the kids had taken a few more dramamine tablets. She and the children were off to dream land after about thirty minutes out. "Good," I thought, "I would rather be anxious on this leg of the trip by myself."

As far as time, it took a little short of eternity to reach sight of land after our departure from Grand Turk. (Now I know how the crew of Columbus' ships felt after being at sea for sixty days without sight of land.)

From fifty miles out, Puerto Rico looked great. The weather, however, was just a little short of terrible over the island. Betwixt clouds and rainshowers, I could see bits of precious land. St. Thomas was about thirty miles due east of Puerto Rico. All we had to do was fly down the northern coast of Puerto Rico and land at St. Thomas. That was simple. Right? Wrong. There was a belt of thunderstorms along the north coast of Puerto Rico and a big fat thunderhead sitting on top of St. Thomas. St. Thomas was in a downpour with winds gusting to forty-five miles an hour.

Martha was awake by now and alert, but had not yet broken radio silence. I told San Juan radio where we were and they located us on radar. They kept an eye on us as we bounced through rain and clouds on our way to St. Thomas, which was due east.

Things were not all that bad until we arrived near unto St. Thomas. The airport had a VOR approach for an instrument landing. But the VOR station was on a 1,550 foot peak, with the airport at sea level about five miles away from the station itself.

The rain was so bad I could not see anything outside the window, nor could I hear anything inside the window. I was on a VFR (Visual Flight Rules) flight plan so things were not too "according-to-the-rules" of flying. The airport shut down temporarily because of the storm. So for about fifteen minutes we were sent out to circle over the water somewhere southwest of St. Thomas on a radial out of the VOR. All the time it was raining cats and dogs. Martha continued radio silence.

The rain lifted slightly and I asked for a special VFR clearance to land. They wouldn't give an instrument VOR landing. Guess they didn't want unfamiliar pilots running into either mountain or town. However, we flew east just below the tops of the mountains on the south side of the island. With a heading toward the airport, I knew it would come into sight any time. And sure enough, it came into view directly in front of us when we were about one mile out. Martha broke radio silence and said, "You're a pretty good pilot." I needed that.

ANTIGUA, HERE WE COME

After waiting out the storms around St. Thomas and the Virgin Islands, we were off in the crystal blue sky to Antigua, our home for the next few years. I had been there twice before, but only on brief visits. Neither Martha or the children had ever been there. It was truly by faith in the Lord and me that she was on her way. When we went to Brazil, she jumped on an airplane and went with four small children. The same procedure was followed on this journey to Antigua. She has truly been a wife to me as Sarah was to Abraham in making such moves. She has just picked up and moved. A missionary husband cannot ask for much more than that.

It took only an hour and a half to make the two hundred miles from St. Thomas to Antigua. The weather was typical Caribbean weather all the way. (Except for occasional thunderstorms because of passing tropical waves, the weather in the West Indies is just great for flying.)

To say the least, there was no little excitement in the cockpit as we started looking to the blue horizon for a glimpse of Antigua.

"Is the Antigua," Cindy questioned.

"No," I answered. "Its just a cloud's shadow on the water." (The shadow of clouds can be very deceptive over water. At a distance it looks almost like land through the haze.)

It wasn't long, however, when beautiful Antigua made its way through the haze and into our view. What a relief! Satisfaction. Mission accomplished. My first international flight was about to end in success.

Chucking down the landing gear of the plane and lining up for final approach to Coolidge International Airport brought a sense of accomplishment to my aviation bones. It was a feeling of "Well done good and faithful pilot." (Only pilots can really understand these accomplishments.)

We had flown a little over sixteen hours from West Monroe, Louisiana. I thanked God for a week for the safe journey He had made for us to bring us to these beautiful souls of the Wet Indies. He had brought us to a task of beginning a great work of extension training. I just felt a fantastic amount of gratitude to Him. I have always felt such for God, but at that particulate time, the gratitude was extra special. God had worked so much in our lives to help us launch out "over" the deep. We never sank once because of His help. My advice to any prospective missionary would be, "Go for it. Trust in God. He will bring victory to our feeble plans and human resources." To this day He has not let me down once.

Chapter 6

(CRUISING AT ALTITUDE)

INITIAL OPERATIONS

Three days after our arrival in Antigua, Leslie and Christy Jones arrived with their two daughters, Dana and Catina. A week and a half after their arrival, Jim and Julie Crisp arrived. Leslie and Jim were recent graduates of the White's Ferry Road School of Biblical Studies. They were both eager to work with the establishment and operation of the School. It was great to have all of us together in Antigua. Our plans for the last year and a half had become a reality insofar as God bringing us together at our base location of Antigua. Now it was time to dig in.

THE PROGRAM

Before we go any further here, I need to explain the basic mechanics of the School which we had planned. Keep in mind that these were only beginning plans upon which we would learn and develop the School. The development of the School was more of an evolution than an established mode of operation which was unchangeable. Even today, we continue to perfect its operation to meet the needs of Third World brethren.

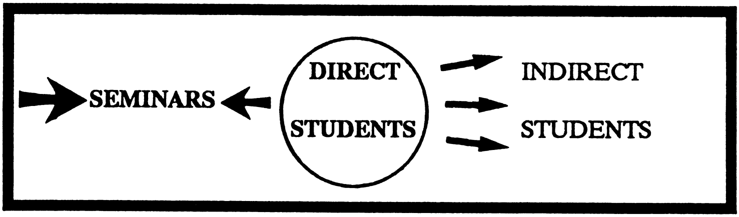
What we wanted to do was to put into operation the principle of 2 Timothy 2:2. In this passage, Paul had written to Timothy the following instructions: "*And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*" Our plan, therefore, was to evangelize by bringing bible teaching and motivation to West Indian church leaders. I felt that such continued studies among church leaders was desperately needed in the West Indian church situation. It is still a great need even to this day, not only in the West Indies, but also throughout the world.

The driving philosophy behind the above approach to world evangelism is the belief that God has an army of soldiers throughout the world. Only ethnocentric paternalism would lead us to believe that only American missionaries can evangelize the world. God already has the men. But these men often lack the skills, tools and educational opportunities to effectively continue or build more effective works. Therefore, by training and motivating national church leaders to evangelize their own peoples, great strides can be made toward world evangelism.

The mechanics of our extension program were simple. We would choose a specific country (island) to which we would begin teaching sessions for a determined period of time. This period of time varied from six months to one and a half years. The first country on our list was Dominica. We went to this country and assembled all the leaders of the church. We conducted all-day seminar studies with the men and usually returned home the following day or went on to another island. It was our plan at the beginning to conduct these seminars once every month at each specific location which we called a "teaching point."

Between the once-a-month sessions, we had each leader read selected materials, complete workbooks, listen to tapes, memorize scriptures, read chapters out of the Bible and anything else that would aid them in their local work with churches. Our main purpose was to educate and motivate. We wanted to motivate faithful church leaders in the Caribbean to study their Bibles and apply the truths they learned to their lives.

The following diagram will give you some idea of the structure of the program:



At one time in the program we had approximately three hundred **direct students** and five hundred **indirect students.** Therefore, in one month's time a tremendous amount of teaching was taking place because of the chain of teaching which was being conducted on a continuous basis. The church in St. Vincent almost doubled in size during this time. I later asked Jimmy Bracken, a preacher and one of our Vincentian students, why the church grew during this time. He said, "The teaching and motivation you brethren brought to us on a continual basis encouraged us to work. And we did." Of course, we certainly would not take credit here. It was actually God who was working. We were only ministers of that word which works in the hearts of men. And, I think we came to St. Vincent at a time when things were right and receptive.

We taught every subject we thought was needful to the local situation. Local needs usually determined at least one course that was to be taught during every seminar. In almost every seminar we also taught a session on leadership. Over a period of six months, we taught the following courses in Grenada. This will give you an idea of what we taught in almost every location where we conducted seminars.

International School of Biblical Studies
Grenada Curriculum
March - August 1982

- Church Growth
- Introduction to the Church
- The Church Leader
- Denominational Doctrines:
  - Transubstantiation
  - Extreme Unction
  - Mariolatry
- 1 Corinthians
- 1, 2 Peter
- Jude
- Revelation
- BCC Evangelism
- Lord's Supper

One problem we had in the West Indian churches was what one brother called "diplomaitis." This is the attitude church leaders develop who have graduated from some school where they received a diploma. Their graduation from school often signaled the end of their personal Bible study. From there it is usually a slow process of spiritual stagnation. Some of the church leaders in the Caribbean had suffered from this ailment. They had become unproductive in their works. The churches for which they were working were not growing. Souls were not being discipled. On the other hand, there were those leaders who were doing a fantastic work. We wanted to get the ideas of the successful workers to those who were lacking. We also wanted to challenge the slothful by the zeal of the diligent.

Transportation for the work was going to be a major problem. How could we get to the students who lived throughout the West Indies on different island-countries? We believe that God worked out the answer to this problem with N8856P. The airplane was without doubt a necessity for the mechanics of the program. As we learned later, commercial flights, when we had to depend on them, almost brought the program to a standstill. We were ever so grateful, therefore, to have the airplane which we used to fly to the different teaching points every week.

Admittedly, in the beginning, the above plan sounded to some like one of those dreams or visions coming out of the mind of one who was not all cooked. But it was my practice then, as it is now, to plan big and above what I thought I could personally do. I always believed that God could fill in the gaps. Faith will accomplish more than our sight will ever be able to see. In following this principle of life, God has yet to let me down.

We did have a dream. We wanted to help some truth-seeking churches in the West Indies. Our dream was based upon helping the church to grow by concentrating our energies upon those who could make it grow - the leaders. I thought that was a worthy purpose with which to begin. I have always believed that we often spend too much time with those in the church who are continual backsliders. We often classify them as weak Christians when actually they are apostates from the truth. We should not entirely neglect these people, but more time should be spent with those who will carry the church into evangelizing the area in which it is located. The missionary must concentrate his work on those who will carry on the work when he leaves. Notice how much time Jesus spent with those first twelve disciples. Why so much time with so few? The answer is obvious. It takes time to disciple faithful men in order that they might teach others also.

THE CHURCH IN ANTIGUA

There were about thirty-five members of the church meeting in the Hawkins Street church building when we arrived in Antigua. Cornelius George was a faithful national preacher working with this church which had been established about seven years previous to our arrival. A second newly established congregation was meeting in a school house in the Villa area of St. John's, the capitol of Antigua. Wayne Stubblefield, an American missionary who had been in Antigua for about one year, was working with this two-month-old church. They had fifty-nine present when my family and I worshiped with them the first Sunday we were in Antigua. The Dorian Flynn's and C. D. Pruett's had just arrived to work with this church. There were also study groups meeting in the area of Jennings and Liberta with which brother Stubblefield was faithfully working. However, the meeting of the group which was in Jennings was eventually discontinued.

DIVIDED ASSUNDER

Jim and Leslie came to Antigua to work as staff members for the extension School. They were both enthusiastic about getting their feet wet in real mission work. We would later be joined by the Jim Allens, Rex Longs and Steve Hursts who would work primarily with the establishment of the church in Antigua. The initial plan was for all of us to stay in Antigua from three to five years. After reaching this goal of establishing an indigenous work, we would all leave. I believe we accomplished that goal.

Our initial plans in the extension program for Leslie, Jim and me were hindered some by the pressures of starting local churches in Antigua. Our primary purpose was to train men throughout the West Indies. For us, Antigua was to be secondary. The establishing of a new church later proved to be very taxing on our time.

Nevertheless, we felt that we could not help others throughout the Caribbean in having church growth if we ourselves were not involved in the establishment of a church in the same cultural setting. Starting a new church, however, takes a tremendous amount of time. We later found that all three of us did not have the time to do both local work in establishing a church in Antigua and the extension work.

The tension between giving time to the local scene and the international scene of the School was strong from the beginning of the program. What eventually happened was that Jim and Leslie went mostly into local work and I stayed almost exclusively with the extension work. This plan was necessary and seemed to work well. Jim and Leslie would do seminars only when they had time and not on a regular basis. We soon discovered that first year that our work was complicated by trying to ride too many horses at the same time.

SAINTS IN ALL SAINTS

In the beginning, we firmly believed that there should be saints meeting in the two of All Saints, the third largest town of Antigua. This town was situated in the middle of the island and promised to be a key central church for the surrounding villages.

There is always an excitement about starting a new church. You know that you are a part of what will become a great movement. Such was true concerning our feelings in the beginning of the church in All Saints. There were six in my family, four in Leslie's family and two in Jim's. That made a total gathering of twelve to begin a restoration movement in the town of All Saints. With these three families we announced the beginning of the church.

The Lord provided the meeting place. We rented the Union Hall in the center of town for fourteen dollars a week. We could met there every night but Wednesday night. That dislocated our first tradition, Wednesday night meetings. We decided to have our mid-week meetings on Tuesday night.

THE FIRST SUNDAY

Why can one always remember so vividly first events? Our first Sunday in All Saints was a first for what later became the Liberta church. Today I can vividly picture those five small backless benches placed in the middle of that old union hall building which had so many holes in the roof that one needed an umbrella every time it rained. The building was gigantic for the small group which began meeting there. I can also remember the pile of sand at the back of the building which was left there by the owners of the facility. But we didn't expect anything greater. We were just excited about God bringing us to this first meeting.

Martha had prepared the bread for the Lord's Supper. It was her first effort, for we could not buy unleavened bread anywhere on the island. She tried her recipe on me first. It tasted like Noah had served it on the Ark. But it would have to do. We had paper cups for the communion service and, of course, Welch's grape juice. (Somehow, the Lord has taken Welch's grape juice "into all the world.") I can also remember vividily seeing Christy lighting a mosquito coil to keep away man's number one tormentor.

It was a worship period never to be forgotten. Leslie preached Jim led the singing, and I taught the Bible class. The ladies had prepared a small "love feast." We ate that, had another period of singing and prayer, and then concluded for the day. There were twenty people present that first Sunday.

We returned home after the meeting to break another tradition. We decided not to have Sunday evening essembly. We wanted to have one long assembly one time on Sunday for those who had to walk great distances. Sunday evenings could be used for teaching home Bible classes. It really worked out well.

For our second meeting on Tuesday evening we had thirty-four present. We were on our way to growth. Our local work was looking great and we were excited about it. We know it was God who was giving the increase, and as long as we gave Him the glory, all was sure to go well.

This was the beginning of the All Saints church. We later moved this church assembly to the neighboring village of Liberta to unite with the church that was first organized there from a mid-week Bible study group that had been started by Wayne Stubblefield. This group was later developed by Leslie and Christy. Liberta was only about one and a half miles from All Saints, so the union of the two churches was only logical when we made plans to build a building. Today, the church is meeting in its own building on the outskirts of Liberta. Brother Milton Nelson, a local self-supporting preacher, continues to be the faithful preacher for this congregation.

Chapter 7

(MAINTAINING ALTITUDE)

THE FIRST EXTENSION TRIP

I was as about as anxious as a ten-year-old on Christmas Eve to make our first extension trip. I had been in Antigua one month and was ready to get things going with the extension program. It was October, 1980 and I knew that God wanted things on their way.

WHERE TO GO FIRST

Leslie, Jim and I had been to Dominica on a campaign a year before our arrival in Antigua. We knew most of the church leaders on this particular island. We determined, therefore, that this island should be our first attempt at our plan of extension seminars since we had talked to the leaders there a year earlier about the program. We planned to conduct the first seminar on a Thursday morning. We hoped that two or three church leaders would come whom we had invited earlier by letter. We would teach the all-day seminar and return to Antigua on Friday morning.

I sent a telegram to John Massicot, the only national leader on Dominica we knew who had a P.O. Box. After a year of silence from us since the campaign, I wondered how the telegram might communicate our desires. I simply stated, "*Will arrive October 2nd, at 9:00 AM to talk with Dominican church leaders about Extension Training Program. Could you meet us at the airport?*"

At this time we were still very apprehensive concerning our approach to the West Indian leaders. We certainly did not want them to feel that we were coming to tell them what to do. Our purpose was to give Bible teaching, not make church decisions for them. We always proceeded with caution and stayed with this basic plan.

THE FIRST FLIGHT

For this first trip, I suggested that Leslie, Jim and I meet at my house at 7:00 AM Thursday. I also suggested that from my house we go to the airport which was about five minutes away. This was our first trip and I must confess that I was as fidgety as a dry leaf on a windy Kansas day. I awoke at 5:30 AM. The butterflies started up. I thumbed through my checklist. "Life raft, life vests, flare gun, emergency locator beacon ...." The flight plan went through my mind a dozen times. After all, this was my first flight in the West Indies after our arrival. And I did not learn much on our arrival flight. We were flying into "unknown" areas for all of us. It was all new.

At 6:15 AM I went to the airport. I wanted to check on filing a flight plan. I was new at this in the West Indian airports so I wanted to talk to the men in the tower before we left. One files a flight plan in the tower in the

West Indies, not on the phone or in a Flight Service Station as in the States.

The control towers in some Caribbean islands are something between the local coffee shop and Grand Central Station. It's not your everyday U.S. of A. dignified control tower.

When I received the flight plan form from the control tower operator, I tried reading the French on the form. That did not work. These flight plans, I thought, were certainly different from what I was accustomed in America. The controller recognized that I was having a terrible time trying to look all professional while attempting to read the garbled mess.

"Cana help ya," he asked.

"What?" I inquisitively responded.

"Cana hep ya full ou da flat plun?", He repeated. (I knew I was in trouble. I thought, "What in the world am I going to do when I talk to this fellow while airborne?")

After about twenty "what's and huh's" I managed to give the information for the flight plan. I went home exhausted. I hadn't even got off the ground.

When I returned to the house, Leslie and Jim had already arrived and were ready to go. So it was back to the airport on our motorcycles. The gate which opened to the road leading to where the airplane was parked was locked. We waited. I should have known that it was too simple just to get into N8856P and fly off. I was in a new world of flying and it had not yet occurred to me how many changes I would have to make, both culturally and in the system of aviation. But I would soon learn patience - at least some patience - and the system of aeronautical maneuvering characteristics of the Caribbean.

The keeper of the gate finally showed up, so we were on our way. While getting the plane loaded, a pilot by the name of Philip came by looking for a ride to Dominica. He was a transport pilot who had much experience flying in the Caribbean. I thought, "Thank you Lord for sending this guide for our first trip."

"Well, we're ready to go," I joyfully said.

"Have you cleared customs, yet," Philip questioned.

"Customs? What about customs?", I asked.

Philip proceeded to inform us that all private flights must first clear customs and immigrations before every departure. Well, I know that. It was back to the airport terminal. I always wondered what would have happened if we would have just jumped in the airplane and left, just like one does back in the States. But we were not in the States anymore and that fact was becoming increasingly clear to me.

UP AND AWAY

After completing what later became a routine procedure for every trip - paperwork for immigrations and customs - we were off. We climbed into the crystal blue sky to 7,500 feet, contacted Guadeloupe and informed them that we were about to enter their airspace. Their portion of tierra firma was about fifty miles ahead, approximately sixty miles from Antigua. We began descent over Guadeloupe toward Dominica, which was only about forty miles due south of Guadeloupe. In a few minutes Marrigot Airport, which was on the east side of Dominica, was in sight, at least the east end of it was. The west end of the airport was enjoying heavy rain showers. Of necessity, therefore, we landed downwind into the rain. The approach from the west end of the airstrip was over the mountains and down into a valley. I didn't really want to take that route in heavy rain showers.

After venturing through the diabolical paperwork again, we found none of the church leaders waiting for us at the airport. Immediately, I thought that our telegram had not been received by the brethren. Or, no one wanted to meet us. Or, . . . there were a thousand other "or's" that went through my mind. It was an hour and a half taxi ride through the relentless mountains of Dominica to Roseau the capitol.

Though the mountain road was exhausting, the beauty of Dominica captures one's mind to the point of forgetting potholes and mountain curves. The lush, green vegetation of Dominica is something to be experienced, not just seen. The mountains look like big green cucumbers standing on end with a dab of whip cream clouds on top. This country is truly the "isle of nature."

We arrived in Roseau at 11:00 in the morning and were overjoyed. Brother Massicot had given up on us at the airport, since we were late. He had thought that we were on a commercial flight. So when the commercial flight came and went, he thought we were not coming.

He had received our telegram and had contacted all the church leaders of the island. They came from all the churches. A total of eight were present. It was fantastic! We needed that. Being together with these good men for the day was the shot of adrenaline we needed. We could not have had a better introductory session. All of the men were excited about the program, but not half as excited as us. I cannot explain in words the deep satisfaction Leslie, Jim and I had concerning the success of this first seminar. God had taught us that all of our anxieties and worries were only human frailties and wasted emotions in His work in one's life. He was still teaching me trust in His work in my life. I thought of the passage, "*All things work together for good to them that love the Lord.*"

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

The next morning we were up at 6:00 AM and on our way back to the airport. Daniel Didier and brother Massicot took us to the airport. N8856P stood there with her blue nose ready for her commander. Again, after the Great Paper Caper was finished with customs and immigrations, we were heading out of Dominica like birds to 4,500 feet.

Leslie had not flown much in a small plane. In fact, this was about his second flight. The first had been the day before. He had not experienced many thunderstorms in a small plane, either. Nevertheless, over Guadeloupe we were taking one in at 4,500 feet. (It was times like these that I appreciated the good brother Alton Howard who had encouraged me to get my instrument rating before going to the Caribbean. He also paid for the course. The weather in the West Indies is almost always great, but there are times when one has to penetrate clouds and weather in order to make destination.)

After a few minor bumps and a little rain, we passed through the clouds into the clear blue over Guadeloupe. Neither Jim nor Leslie had said a word the entire time we were bumping around in the clouds. After a sigh of relief, Leslie leaned over and said, "Is that the worst thunderstorm you've ever flown through?" It wasn't, but I could never have convinced him of that at the time. They would later experience worse weather. I would also experience some challenging thunderstorms which would beat us around so much that the gages of the plane would be blurry. But the nerves of Leslie and Jim on this trip would settle and later flights would be a little more enjoyable.

Our first extension seminar ended in Dominica with great success. All of us were encouraged. To this day you could never convince me that God did not specifically plan it that way. He knew we needed a great send-off. We knew it, too. I prayed for such and He delivered. The extension program was a work that was desperately needed. I believe God wanted to let us know that it was needed. At least, I have no other explanation for the unusually smooth operation of the work throughout those first months. I believe God wanted to break us in easily and encourage us to keep going. And we did.

My faith grew in those early days of the School. I will never forget those first weeks of the work. Everything went so smoothly that I was thoroughly convinced that more was working in the effort than just our feeble planning. My faith grew as I saw the Father work out every problem. Every obstacle that presented itself to the work was overcome. I was convinced once again that our efforts in life as His children are nothing without the providential hand of the Father. In those days, we could "*do all things through Him that strenghthened us.*"

I maintain the philosophy of work as a Christian that one must first plan his work for the Lord. Work out the details as much as is humanly possible. Next, pray that God bless your plans. Satan will work against your plan with all his might. You must pray that God will help you overcome any obstacle that Satan puts in the way. Plan your work, and let God work your plan.

Chapter 8

(PENETRATING THE CLOUDS)

BUSINESS AS USUAL

I brought a motorcycle with us when we moved to the West Indies. (I know. Don't tell me. I broke a promise.) I thought it would be a little less expensive to buy and operate than a second car. And, I could just motor around feeling good while gas was a traumatic two dollars a gallon back then.

It wasn't long, however, until this unpredictable machine skipped out from under me. I made an unsuccessful turn at a slippery intersection that left me laying embarrassingly prostrate on the ground, face down with skinned knees and a red face (I had an audience). The motorcycle suffered few broken ornaments. My pride as a fashionable motorcyclist was totally smashed. For a week my knees were so sore from the scabs that the only thing I could comfortably wear was shorts. My eight year old daughter Cindy said, "Daddy, you need to put your helmet on your knees." Well, what can I say.

I suppose I will also have to tell you about this incident I had in downtown St. Johns in the middle of about one hundred spectators. I had driven up and parked the motorcycle at the edge of one of those open sewers.

It was about two feet deep and full of all sorts of . . . well . . . you know what is in a sewer. I went into a store, purchased some goods and returned to the cycle. I first put on my helmet, and then leaped from the left onto the seat of the cycle. I had forgotten that I had parked so close to the sewer which was on right side of the parked cycle. When I went to put my foot down to stop the motion of the cycle which I had just thrown off center by leaping on, there was nothing there, except what was two feet down. This all happened is slow motion, mind you. Being off balance, me, motorcycle and goods - I could do nothing to stop the fall - just fell right over into everything that was in that sewer. Slush! I can still smell it today. When I looked up, it seemed that the entire city had rushed there to see this most unusual stunt of a crazy American. I was embarrassed.

GETTING SERIOUSLY INVOLVED

By December 1980, we were seriously into the work of teaching seminars. I was making at least one flight out a week and we were averaging five seminars a month. The work was going great. God was blessing it in every way.

Our experiences with the church in the Caribbean on such a broad and continued bases allowed us to gain a very good overall view of the church as a whole. Our travels also opened up revelations on key problem areas of mission efforts throughout the islands. We were here to deal with these problems the best we could. Many churches in the East Caribbean were growing little; some were not growing at all. We wanted to know why. On the other hand, there were those churches that were growing by leaps and bounds. These were very exciting works and manifested great promise for the future.

In our first seminars we conducted church growth studies to orient our understanding of the churches in general. Such studies were quite revealing. These studies revealed a stagnation that had set in with many Caribbean churches. They also revealed the reasons why other churches were progressing at such a great pace. One of our tasks was to inform churches of growth methods that were working in different areas.

We wanted churches to grow. This was our reason for coming to the West Indies. Justification for any program of work is the salvation of souls. This would be the true test of our work. But during our work, it hurt to see churches that were not growing. It hurt to see churches that were divided over matters which had no relevancy to the saving of souls. There was much to be done to help the existing churches to get over stagnation and into a state of steady growth.

There were also areas that needed evangelization. Our method of evangelism at the time was to disciple and motivate national church leaders to evangelize their own people in their own culture. We wanted to give them the necessary literary tools to help hold up their hands in reaching their own people. We also wanted to provide education and motivation for the challenges that faced them. It was through the local leaders that we wanted to reach out to those areas in the West Indies where the simplicity of the gospel had not yet gone. We were relying on a 2 Timothy 2:2 approach to get the job of evangelism accomplished.

THE UNEVANGELIZED

Speaking of evangelism, we were at 7,500 feet over the country of Martinique on our first trip to St. Vincent. Over 400,000 people lived on this island paradise. It is a beautiful country filled with lavish vegetation and spectacular mountain views. God no doubt smiled when He allow volcanoes of ages past to form this haven of nature. Lush mountains stretch into the silhouette of the blue skies. Vegetation coats every square foot of the island like a thick green blanket.

Martinique, a country beautiful in nature, was very ugly in darkness. The number of our churches on this island at the time we were there could be measured by a great big zero. When I made this first flight over the jagged cliffs and mountains of the island, all I could think of was how we could start the church 7,500 feet below.

The government of Martinique had already rejected the visa of one possible worker. He was from St. Vincent, however. The French were careful about allowing immigration from the other islands. I later learned that one can get a visa into this country if the correct procedures are followed. It seemed hopeless, though, to be able to find an American missionary any time soon who would answer the Martinique call for help. At the time of this writing, however, I have heard that a church has been started on the island. We must thank God for this and pray that the French speaking work in the Caribbean will grow.

THE FIRST FULL TEACHING SESSION

Our second trip to Dominica constituted the first full seminar of our work in the islands. We left Antigua in blue skies and spent the next forty-five minutes in tune with the birds. On final approach to Melville Hall Airport on the west side of Dominica, we made our way over the ridge of mountains and down into the valley with N8856P. This was always a thrilling approach as the mountains would slowly creep above us on descent. Banana and coconut trees would rush by us at 130 mph. The landing on 080 runway was always reassuring. If one ever had to go around for another shot here, he could be comforted in the fact that climbout was straight out over the sea.

The landing that day began a great session of leadership training. After we assembled the church leaders, the session began at 10:00 in the morning at the Merigot building on the east side of Dominica. It was an endurance test. These men were truly hungering and thirsting after righteousness. They lapped up every morsel of bread we could throw out. Fatigue grew as we came to a break of one hour for dinner.

We concluded the class sessions at 11:00 that night. Afterward, it was private conversations until 1:30 to 2:00 in the morning. About half of the leaders had to get up at

4:00 AM in order to get to the bus station on time to return home. The entire session was just great. I enjoyed every tiring movement, though we would try to shorten the hours for future meetings.

The following morning we were up at 6:30 AM. We packed up and made our way to the airport. Through immigrations and customs we went. And of course, I paid landing fees, customs fees and immigrations fees. (We felt fleeced like a flock of sheep every time we landed or took off from some Caribbean airports.)

We jumped into N8856P. Everybody was ready.

"Clear," I yelled. I rattled off the check list. I turned the key and zap. The battery was as dead as a door nail. The Red Baron of aviation had left his master switch on the day before and run the battery plum down. Every sipping of energy had been drained from the suffering battery. This was a humbling experience for a pilot. Leslie and Jim spared me by maintaining radio silence. But I can assure you, they thought what they wanted to say.

When I finished beating myself on the back, I decided to resort to archaic principles of aviation motoring. Have you ever tried to turn the propeller of a 260 horsepower, fuel inject aircraft engine in a futile effort to bring it to life? Probably not. But let me tell you that it doesn't work so well. First, there's that gigantic propeller looking to slap you a good lick when the engine fires. Then, there's the fuel injection. Is it ever temperamental. After about fifteen minutes of foolishly flipping the prop, I decided that there should be a better way to solve this mania.

So, we were in a predicament. I looked over to the airport fire truck and thought, "I wonder ...." It did. (It was times like these that I thanked Piper Aircraft for the old 12-volt electrical systems. I know that I could always find a 12-volt battery somewhere.)

"I've a little problem, Sir," I politely stated to the reluctant fireman. "Could you bring the fire truck over and jump your battery to mine?"

He did not have any jumper cables, but he knew where to get some in town. He was off and in about thirty minutes returned with the cables. With a smile on his face - I knew what he was thinking - he hooked them up. Have you ever seen a fire truck jumping the battery of an airplane? I had to take a picture of it.

After a few revolutions on the starter, N8856P fired up. The blast of the prop wash felt good and most reassuring. After I kissed the fire truck battery and the attendant - I really didn't, but I wanted to - we were off. We floated to 4,500 feet and slithered through the atmosphere for home.

SOUTH AMERICA, HERE I COME

In November 1980, I decided I would make a trip to the Pan American Lectureships in Caracas, Venezuela. This is the lectureship where most of the missionaries of the church in Latin America meet every year with representatives from their supporting churches in the States. It is truly a great event and one I have tried to go to as much as possible. This particular year I wanted to go through Trinidad on the way to Caracas and return through Grenada. I printed a handful of General Declaration (Gen. Decs.) forms and headed out. (Pilots must fill out and file several of these forms at every stop in the Caribbean and South America on entry into and exit from a country.)

After three hours of flight and a little weather over the northern end of Trinidad, I set N8856P gently down at Piarco Airport in Trinidad. The paper machine began to function. First of all, there were Gen. Decs. for health clearance. Then, there were Gen. Decs. for immigration. Of course, they had to have their share. (I think they used old Gen. Decs. for scratch paper after the pilots leave.) And then, there is the share of Gen. Decs. for Trinidad customs. Yes, it took six copies to get in.

After a couple of nights in a hotel that stunk like a stale sewer, I was back to the airport. It all started again. Two Gen. Decs. for customs. Two Gen. Decs. for immigration. Two Gen. Decs. for the gentlemen of the Health Department. And of course, the tower needed its copy also. It took thirteen Gen. Decs. to get in and out of Trinidad. I thought it a little ridiculous at the time. I have always believed that the world paper shortage was directly caused by the Piarco Airport in Trinidad. These people should be reprimanded for their incessant greed for paper.

FLIGHT THROUGH MOUNTAINS

Flying along the north coast of Venezuela on a clear day is nothing short of an experience with nature, a naturalist's dream. Big green extensions of earth reach to over seven thousand feet on the coast. The blue blanket of Caribbean water lay snugly to the base of these giant heaps of mother earth. It's really a beautiful sight, one never to forget.

I had descended to 4,500 coming into Maiquitia Airport outside Caracas. Now get this. I was flying west. I was on the north side of the seven thousand foot mountains at 4,500 feet. I was about a mile out over the water and the tower controller instructed me in broken English, "Maka turno to 180 da ... gree." (Translated, "Turn 180 degrees south.")

"Somebody is not thinking here," I nervously thought to myself. "Maybe the controller wants to see how far I can fly through a mountain."

"Maiquetia Approach," this is N8856P. "Are you sure I should be flying 180 degrees? I'm flying straight for the mountains!"

"Oh, oh" the controller gasped over the radio. "N8856P flya norte (north)!"

I get the heebie-jeebies every time I think what could have happened if I had been in solid IFR weather. For sure, I would probably not be writing this book.

GRENADA COMMUNISM

On my way back from Caracas I wanted to stop and visit the churches of Grenada in order to set up a series of seminars. I had not been back in Grenada since 1976 and this trip would offer an opportunity to visit the brethren. Several months earlier, however, Maurice Bishop had overtaken this peaceful country in a military coup. He had unfortunately called in the Cubans and Russians to give him advice; and of course, they brought their guns with them. It was heartbreaking to see this happen to such a tranquil and freedom loving people. One thing the Russians always gave the people in those days was a load of guns. Guns came before food and hospitals and schools. This is how power was kept. When I was in Grenada in 1972, I did not see a gun on the whole island. But things had changed. Communism was now here.

To say the least, I was a little apprehensive about this visit. While in the air, the air traffic controller asked me what was my purpose of visit. That was the first time I had been asked that question while in the air. It did not ease my apprehension, either. But I had decided to land and take all the questioning. I felt sure I was going to be interrogated in some dark and roach infested room.

Well, they didn't throw me into any concentration camp as my mind imagined. They asked their questions. I gave my answers. I was relieved. They may have been, too. Every trip after that was without any problems. Since American and West Indian troops have liberated Grenada, things have settled back into the normal environment of the typical Caribbean country. However, all this came after our work there. While we were there, things were a little tense at times.

CHALLENGES

This was my first visit to the church of Grenada in four years. A lot had happened in that four years. The only way I can describe the situation is by asking you to imagine what two cats look like after a rip, snorting tangle with one another. This was the first time I had ever seen the words of James in action. "You lust, and have not: you kill and covet, and cannot obtain: you fight and war ..." (James 4:2). The brethren here had been doing their share of fighting and warring.

West Indians can really be vicious with one another. I had known this of their culture for several years. Ninety-five percent of the problem at this time in the church was with the Grenadian preachers. Three men had written a letter viciously attacking another preacher who was supported by a Stateside church which knew nothing of the goings on. A group of preachers who wrote the letter were trying to get the other preacher off the island. The accused procured the services of a lawyer to threaten the accusers with a lawsuit. The church in St. Georges, the capitol, split. Another letter was written with a more vicious tenor. Threats came from all involved. I thought the government had problems in Grenada before my coming. But compared to the state of the church, the government was in perfect peace.

The situation caught me by complete surprise. I was depressed to see brethren so unmercifully and maliciously attacking one another. Satan had invaded the church here with relentless power. I tried to encourage the brethren to make peace as much as possible. I promised that we would return with seminars. I prayed.

As it worked out in the months to come, the real problem of the church in Grenada left the island. Almost all problems of this nature center around personalities. The real problem in Grenada centered around a common problem in the West Indian church. There seems to always be an individual who wants to be a Diotrephes. When you get two of these individuals on one island or in one church, something usually has to give. We can thank God, though, that the church in Grenada is now at peace and doing well.

One good thing did come out of that first trip to Grenada. When I went to file my flight plan to return home, the tower controller was curious about my work. So we talked religion. It was my first home Bible study in a control tower. The man was an Anglican and I promised I would return. We would study more. However, when I returned on the next trip I could not find this particular tower operator.

THOSE CHALLENGING AIRPORTS

Sometime in the past - I believe before airplanes were invented - they started to make airport runways in the Caribbean islands. They made the runways, and then waited to see if an airplane could land on them. If an airplane landed, they called it an airport, and not main street for some town.

Montserrat is the classic example. You have to approach from the northeast. To add a little luster to the approach, you will always have a ninety degree crosswind of about 25 mph. If you're lucky, it will be less than 20 mph.

Well, here we come into Montserrat. Hang on. In from the northeast we cautiously set up our approach. One thousand five hundred feet down to one thousand. (Traffic always lands on runway 14.) We're at about eight hundred feet now, on left base. (Pucker nose and lips at this point.) We look up and there is a rock-solid cliff that goes straight up. At eight hundred feet it looks like it is ten thousand feet high. We head straight for it. At the right time - it better be right the first time - we hang a sharp left turn, catch an updraft - sometimes a little turbulence - hit the flaps, mash on the right rudder while crabbing into the wind for a crosswind landing. The trick is to hold your nose on your face just right and pucker your lips. Then there is that clump of trees right at the pucker point where unwary pilots touch down. It messes everything up when you are about ten feet off the ground.

At the threshold we flop around in the cross currents of wind for a few seconds. With a little luck, you'll hit it right almost every time. Of course, there is always the smashed up Cessna 310 piled up over to your right to remind you that not all pilots have puckered their lips correctly at the point of pucker.

Those airports can be challenging. Only two pilots were allowed to fly into Saba at the time we were in the islands. The airport there is another "cliff-hanger." It is built on essentially the exact top of a small mountain. If you under-shoot the runway, too bad. If you over-shoot, or your brakes go out, you're shark's food. But for the comfort of those who would like to try their hand at a Caribbean excursion in a small plane, all airports are in good shape. All of the major islands have good runways because of the commercial airlines that fly in. If you are thinking about instrument approaches to some of the more challenging airports, forget it. Only a few airports have even an NDB approach. And the NDB's are sometimes out of service. But places like Guadeloupe, Trinidad, St. Croix, and of course, San Juan, are fixed up for good instrument approaches, some with ILS (Instrument Landing Service) approaches. When you get to the smaller islands, however, its VFR all the way.

But again, most of the flying is in excellent weather. Just do not go down during the hurricane season, or from about September to November. December and January seem to me to be very good months. The air is clear and the temperature is cool. I believe these are the two best months of the year for being in the Caribbean. But again, I think every month of the year is great to be in the Caribbean.

Chapter 9

(CHECKING THE CHARTS)

LEARNING THE TERRITORY

When we began the School we jumped in with all fours. The flights to our destinations were not all that long. They averaged only about an hour and a half to each seminar. But it seemed like some of the trips lasted ten hours after we had taught a full day's worth of material. The work was going great. Every successful trip just added fuel to our enthusiasm about the program.

There was only one limiting factor to the work. It was m-o-n-e-y. It was economical to operate the airplane, especially when we compared the use of it with commercial flying. We were praying that we would get more funding for the plane in order that we might be able to expand the program. But I also knew that in such situations the missionary is often deceived into thinking that the work of God is limited to the supply of money. It is not, of course. God is the only real supply that is necessary. Money has never limited His work.

SPREAD TOO THIN

When I came to the West Indies at the beginning of the extension program, there were some leftover works from the States that I had to finish which did not specifically relate to the work in the Caribbean. I was working with the translating group of the English Standard Version. But I worked out of this responsibility in about six months. (Whatever became of the project, I do not know.) I was also finishing a book on Christian apologetics entitled *The Fall of Unbelief*. I had been working on this book for ten years and it was good to finally dot that last period in those first few months in the West Indies. I also had to complete also a book on world evangelism which I had been working on for about three years. Another project I wanted to continue in the area of writing was a book on doctrines. Most of the material on this work had been put into Portuguese and I wanted to get it into English. There were also a few other minor works with which I as struggling. All writers have those on-going projects. Some of them never get finished. Some do. I was determined to see that the above projects fall among the completed.

These writing projects from the States added to my burden in the first few months of the work in the West Indies. But they had to be finished. At the time I was a persistent and addicted writer. Besides that, I firmly believed that God wanted these works finished. I felt destiny and when one feels such, he cannot stop until he has accomplished his goal.

God gave me a desire to write - I don't know if He has yet given me the talent. I have always believed that I was never that good of a writer. However, I have always felt guilty when I did not write because I could see so many areas in mission work which needed special pieces of literature which no one had filled. At the time, writing religious materials for mission efforts was one course I had set my life on which to this day has not yet been changed. Some writers write because they like to write. Others write to make money. I did sell a tract of mine back in the early seventies to a publisher for a few peanuts. But since then I cannot remember writing a book for profit. That has just not been my motivation for writing. Nevertheless, the "financial" writers are usually living in poor houses. And then, there are those who write because they feel it is their God-destined duty. I feel that I am one of the latter. I have always been driven by the thought that the printed page will take one's teachings to distant lands and into the future past one's own life. And besides that, I have always felt I had something to say.

Brother J. C. Choate, Dryden Sinclair and I have always been in agreement on the purpose for the publication of Christian literature. We have all believed that what is important is getting the printed message out. I have always appreciated their efforts on a worldwide basis for accomplishing this goal. Few brethren probably realize the tremendous impact these two brothers have had on worldwide evangelism through the printing of literature.

NEW TESTAMENT STUDY COMMENTARY

When we were in Brazil, a dream was conceived by my realization that mission churches usually had Bibles but no commentary to help them to understand the Bible. I believed that this was the situation in most areas of the world where the church is not so strong, especially in the Third World.

Third World churches do not have and usually cannot acquire commentaries to aid them in their Bible studies. Its easy to say that they can just use their Bible. But put yourself in their position as a Bible teacher or preacher. It is easy to say let them buy one. But they are not available to them. If they were available, a one-volume commentary produced on just one book of the Bible in our capitalistic America would cost a good week's salary in many Third World countries. Would you give a week's salary to buy a commentary on one book of the Bible?

Because of the above need and predicament of Third World Christians I decided in 1980 to begin a project which I called "The International New Testament Study Commentary Project." What I set out to do was to write a one-volume commentary on the entire New Testament. I wanted to include helps and study outlines which would assist church leaders in their efforts to lead struggling and isolated saints to a greater understanding of the Scriptures. In the fall of 1980, I began the project.

The writing of different sections of the material aided the extension work. I could write, print and distribute samples to the church leaders. This gave them something to study. It was like killing two birds with one stone. However, it did consume great amounts of time at different stages of the work. I was determine, however, to fulfill this need.

This project has since been completed and over 15,000 copies of the commentary have been printed and distributed to countries throughout the world.

EXTENSION SCHEDULE

After about four months of operation of the School, we were making regular flights to Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada, Montserrat, Nevis and St. Kitts. We were making trips to other islands for congregational workshops and special counselling sessions. These sessions usually involved encouraging local leaders, problem-solving and/or setting up workshops for future dates. At this time I was doing about everything I could. As a pilot, I had to go on every trip, though the trips consumed only about two days out of the week. But a trip of two days (two seminars) often took a week of preparation. This left little time for local work in Antigua.

LOCAL WORK

The small church we started in All Saints was showing signs of growth. Thanks to the faithful local work of the Joneses and Crisps we were averaging about forty-five in attendance. With the establishment of this church came the responsibility of teaching classes, making visits and preaching sermons. We also had three campaigns the first year in Antigua. At the time, I didn't know how we could do everything we had planned to do. But again I was thinking only of manpower and not Godpower.

I always had a bad habit of biting off more than I could chew. Martha says I dream too much. I was about to choke on my dreams the end of our first year in Antigua. But I knew God would work out my messes. At least, I had the faith that He would. And to this day He seems to have always worked them out.

One thing I credit to my upbringing on the farm was hard work. I can thank my father for that. During the work season on the farm we slaved twelve to sixteen hours a day. My father owned an old P-Case combine, an out-of-date contraption which he used because I think he just like to tinker with it. The old combine was broke down more than it ran. He would spend weeks working on it before harvest. Prior to harvest one year, his brother Herman was unfortunately killed in a car accident. His farm machinery was auctioned to the public by his surviving wife in order that she might move to the city.

During the auction, I believe God knew we needed some relief from that old P-Case contraption. Anyway, my Dad decided he would stay in the background in order to bid up the Model 55 John Deer self-propelled combine which his brother had recently bought. It was a great machine. My dad placed a bid on the machine. No one else bid. He had to buy it. He went to the bank to get some money and we three brothers rejoiced. That harvest I remember staying up until one and two o'clock in the morning cutting wheat just to drive that machine. I learned one thing about work, if you have good machinery and enjoy what you are doing, you cannot get enough work to satisfy you. I have never felt it burdensome to work for God day and night. When you have the best Boss in the universe, it only makes it easier. And when you enjoy His work, His commandments are not grevious.

VISIT OF THE FEDS

Meanwhile, back to the airport in Antigua, there was this pilot who took off in a Piper Aztec. One engine conked out on take off, the other was about to give up the ghost, too. This wasn't a real good situation, so the pilot headed for a clearing to plow a new landing strip in the thorn bushes of Antigua.

Well, the plane and the pilot and the single terrified passenger made a great gear-up landing in the backyard of a local Antiguan's property. The pilot and passenger climbed out of the smashed up Aztec without a scratch. The plane had an American registration so the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) boys had to come over from Puerto Rico to check out the problem. And while they made this "business" trip they had to give a few field checks to other American registered aircraft in the area, of which one was N8856P. So they walked up and down the parking areas of Coolidge Airport like guards looking for escaped convicts. Their primary objective was to find aircraft with too much corrosion. And, they caught one unsuspecting carcass. Fortunately, N8856P escaped these scrutinizing inspectors.

DRUG RUNNERS

I must tell you about the time I took N8856P to Grand Turk to check out an Aztec with the possibilities of buying it. It was an interesting trip. Grand Turk is where a lot of re-fueling goes on, both for the good guys and the bad guys of the great drug capers of Latin America. The good guys in Grand Turk decided to relieve the drug smugglers of a few airplanes. And the confiscated flying machines were then put up for public auction. So, I went for a look.

At about this time I was hurting for a twin. I knew how safe single-engined machines were, but if an engine ever did go to sleep ... well ... just hope you can swim if you survive the landing on the waves. Anyhow, a twin would at least give my passengers some psyhcological relief. The Grand Turk police had five or six planes on which they were taking sealed bids. They were going cheap. A $30,000 Aztec would sell for about $15,000. That was too good to resist, so off I went.

Grand Turk was four hours flight from Antigua at 10,000 feet and about 160 mph. I left about 6:00 in the morning and flew straight to Grand Turk non-stop. But about three-quarters of the way there I came upon this sixty-foot yacht that was burning like blazes in the middle of the sea. I circled to take a look.

Here was this giant specimen of a boat out in the midst of the ocean just being barbecued. I was curious, to say the least, so I immediately called Grand Turk tower to report the mysterious happenings. They said that they would take care of it. Luckily, or whatever, there was a small sailing boat proceeding toward the distressed boat. I could not figure out what was going on. I do know that drug smugglers will steal a boat, make their run, then burn the boat at sea. I could not determine if this was one of those cases. So I left the scene for the remainder of my journey to Grand Turk.

I skidded in on the asphalt of Grand Turk International Airport a little after 10:00 in the morning and called the chief of police to talk about the Aztec for sale. They had two Aztecs, a Beech 18, two twin Bonanzas and a Navajo. I was interested in one of the Aztecs. This was a buy "as is" deal. You could get stuck with a lemon. But I trusted that the drug dealers had kept their ships in tip-top condition. After I prayed that God would give me the particular plane that "I wanted," I proceeded to get my bid into writing for the chief of police.

The officials would determine the highest of the sealed bids in about three weeks from the date I was on the island. I had placed a low bid, but raised it later. At the time I just knew that the Lord wanted us to have this plane. (As I learned later, I figured that the Lord did not want us to have this plane.)

I jumped back into N8856P and headed home. It was about 3:00 in the afternoon by now. Guess what? I passed over the yacht which was having the barbecue that morning. Well, it was really cooking now. But the amazing thing was the Grand Turk tower had done nothing about the matter. After a little more persuasion they did call Puerto Rico and the U.S. Coast Guard dispatched a helicopter to see what was going on. This incident certainly did not give me any encouragement about the possibilities of one receiving immediate aid if he had been marooned somewhere out in the deep around Grand Turk.

DITCHING

Speaking of water, waves and airplanes, let me tell you about ditching. To you who do not know what ditching is, it is a technical term related to a pilot trying to dig a thirty-foot wide ditch in the water with a few hundred pounds of aluminum called an airplane. It usually doesn't ever work out all that well, especially for the unfortunate airplane. But when your fans stop flipping around out over water you don't have much of a choice.

There was the one fellow over in St. Croix who decided to fly a Cessna 185 right into the water one calm night. He was descending at night and somehow became confused on his altitude. The surface of planet earth just came up too soon. He simply flew that beautiful aircraft right into the salt water. He and the four other startled passengers did get out with the raft. After paddling to shore they decided to buy the pilot a new altimeter. He need a new airplane, too.

There is also the clown who was goofing off in a Piper Aztec off the west coast of Guadeloupe. He was trying to see how low he could fly over the water. I guess he was trying too hard. Everything was going great until his props started hitting the water. He then started digging ditches in the water with is prop. He and his passenger got out with their lives. The plane had flipped over and remained afloat for a short period before sinking like the Titanic into the deep blue Caribbean Sea. The pilot and passenger, though, were out in the ocean in their raft for nine hours before they were finally picked up.

There were those cases, too, of airplanes that just flew off into the blue, never to be heard from again. When we had been in the West Indies for about a year a Cessna 310 took off from Trinidad. It just disappeared. Gone! Of course, a lot of this "disappearance" business was the work of drug runners. In fact, a lot of the present day disappearances in the so-called Bermuda Triangle are drug related. I suppose this is why there is often an indifference to such happenings by those who deal with the events on a regular basis.

DANGEROUS FLYING

In the Caribbean one is either flying over mountains or water. To some, this may be considered dangerous flying. Such flying in a single-engined airplane would, I guess, be considered by some to be just a little short of lunacy. I suppose there is at least a little daring adventurism in every pilot. I believe this is especially true for missionary pilots. The apostle Paul said, "*We are fools for Christ.*" I am sure Paul must have been some kind of pilot. But when a job needed to get done for God, I never really considered the risks. I suppose Paul was somewhat that way when he went to Jerusalem for the last time. Read Acts 21:13,14.

The Piper Comanche which we had brought down from the States was a good plane for ditching, if that time ever came. But ditching in the ocean is serious business. Those waves can be like brickbats to aluminum and rivets. If we ever had to ditch in rough seas I knew that our number would almost be up. In smooth water there was a pretty good chance. If the tradewinds were up, however, forget it. But again, in flying the islands one is close to land most of the time. I have often been asked if flying over water bothers me. In those first few months of the work, there was always that lingering feeling, "What if?" But after a short period of time it become home. (And, I have since learned that crash landing in trees is more dangerous than ditching in water. More on this later.)

One thing about flying in the Caribbean that's great is the weather. It is almost always beautiful. If the weather is a mess over an airport, simply wait for about ten minutes. In a few minutes the tradewinds will have it swept away. If you are on the ground when the weather is bad. Stay on the ground. Things will clear up soon. Thunderstorms are rarely the big woolly wonders in the Caribbean like they are in the States. Usually, there will be a build-up to about ten thousand feet. It will dissipate in a few hours. If you are instrument rated, you do not have much to worry about. If you are not, just be more careful. It goes without saying to stay out of and away from hurricanes.

REACHING OUT

It did not take long to learn that the extension School was quite demanding. I was getting tired after about six months operation. But the work had to go on. I knew God would keep it going and me, too. Besides, it was downright fun and the most productive work I had ever done in my life. God was truly working in our lives.

By the end of the first year we had visited most of the islands with which we had planned to work. But there were other mountains to climb. Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Aruba and a host of other challenges stimulated our desires. If we accomplished anything, at least I wanted to feel that God had used us to encourage small, struggling and isolated churches out there between somewhere and nowhere. Most Christians in the States go from new birth to burial in the company of a host of saints. But those in mission areas know that it is different. Every day is a struggle of faith against every wile of discouragement Satan can throw at you. One of our missions, then, was to bring encouragement to those who know the meaning of Acts 14:22, "*We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*" At the time, I was sure God was trying to teach my that great spiritual lesson. The burden of the West Indian churches laid heavily upon my heart.

Chapter 10

(ADJUSTING THE TRIM)

FOR PILOTS ONLY

This chapter is for pilots. If you are not one of those bird men who goes to sleep at night thinking about flying a Lear jet over and around clouds, then you might want to skip this chapter of regression into birdoom.

I suppose every blue blooded American pilot has dreamed of taking his ship on an island hopping adventure through the secret hideouts of the mysterious West Indies. I know I did. There was and is something contagiously exciting about an international journey into the land of the unexpected atmosphere of the tropical Caribbean. I can remember those exciting first flights I made as a newcomer to the area. Each flight was an adventure because of the challenge of the unknown. They were pieces of adventure which came around every Thursday and Friday. I thoroughly enjoyed these trips of ecstacy, not only because of the flying, but because of the fantastic challenges of the extension training work. Every missionary has a sense of adventure and I confess mine. However, let me remind those who might dare to be missionaries because of the adventure. The adventure soon leaves as the burdens of the work are tightly strapped to your back.

When I first went to the West Indies I was an inexperienced, low time instrument rated pilot. They say you are usually the best at instrument flight immediately after getting your instrument rating. I went on that experience. I had a little over two hundred hours of logged flying time. I was really a greenhorn pilot for weather flying, but the West Indies is the perfect setting for new instrument pilots. In the beginning, though, all pilots are inexperienced. But we should not allow inexperience in anything to become a hinderance to learning. Neither should we let it hinder doing good. How can you get experience if you do not start experiencing things? We must always be willing to launch out into the deep. God has already given us the victories. We must go to the battles. Sometimes the risks are high. But for the gospel's sake, we must not count ourselves or lives as dear unto ourselves. (That is not an original statement.)

GOOD ADVICE

Someone asked me what I would advise one who wanted to command his flying ship through the Caribbean waters. Well, there are others who can give better advice than I can. But since I am the one writing this particular book and you are now reading it, then you will have to settle for my advice for the time being.

First thing on the list would be a good airplane. I would not fly to the Caribbean waters in a new plane or with a plane that had a newly overhauled engine. I would put at least fifty hours on the engine or on the new plane before going. Make sure the powerplant is thoroughly broken in and not ready to break up. A good mechanic will tell you that. I would not fly an airplane in the West Indies which had an engine running close to the major overhaul, either.

Single or twin? This question always comes up when pilots start talking about mountains or water. It also comes up when mothers start talking to missionary pilots about flying in the Caribbean. I would not go in a single without some essential insurances. I would have a life raft which costs a pretty penny - about nine hundred greenbacks, depending on the size or capacity. But if you ever needed it, you would care less how much it costs. If you were going to make a holiday trip through the islands, just rent a raft in Miami.

I have always carried a life raft, a life vest for every passenger, a flare gun and a portable Emergency Locator Beacon (ELT). The portable ELT was to make sure they found me out there in all that water. The flare gun was to make sure they could see me. The life raft and vests were to make sure that I was there to be seen and found. Whenever an emergency occurs, its always good to have the best equipment handy to deal with it.

As far as instruments in the airplane, just make sure that the ADF is working well. You are almost always in range of some Nondirection Beacon or VOR station throughout the Caribbean. For many of the islands the ADF is the best security. It's an instrument I have always loved to master. It is a thrill to make an ADF approach on a cloudy day, with a twenty-knot crosswind. Not too many pilots go for such mania, but if you navigate on IFR in the West Indies, just be sure you know how to use an ADF. Remember, you will be essentially IFR when you are over water with no land in sight or are in thick haze. In the Caribbean you are always over water, and often in a thick haze.

Speaking of haze, I have flown direct from Antigua to Grenada on at lease two occasions on a cloudless day. And on that cloudless day I could not see below or any any of the other islands over which I flew. At 7,500 feet I could not see anything. This is what is called a "white out." In the West Indies, the haze can get that bad.

LONG RANGE

One reason why I liked the Piper Comanche - Piper made a mistake when they discontinued this ship - was that it would fly beyond the capacity of any man's bladder. Fifty-five percent power would give a long seven hours and twenty minutes of flight. I later traded the Comanche for a Beech Travel Air with larger tanks which had almost the same endurance.

On almost all of my flights I did not have to refuel at the destination. That was good because there was usually no fuel at my destination. I always felt more comfortable having a two-hour reserve after almost every trip.

An old pilot who had been in the Caribbean for several years told me that there were two things which caused most accidents in the Caribbean. One was old airplanes that had not been maintained well. The other was pilots trying to stretch out a tank of gas. If you are going to fly the Caribbean, remember that airplane gas tanks just do not stretch.

Many of the islands do not have fuel. So, one should carefully plan his flights. Before leaving Miami, be sure to contact the Flight Service Station to see if there is fuel in Nassau, if you plan to stop there. Also, check Grand Turk if you plan to stop there. Georgetown and Exuma almost always have 100LL. Usually, they have it in all of the major stopover places. However, I did set down in Grand Turk one time when they were bone dry. Luckily, we could fly fifteen minutes over to South Caicas which did have fuel. When one gets down to the Lesser Antilles, just make sure you ask before going. If your destination is as dry as your tanks when you arrive there, then you have problems.

For charts, you will need to get the following World Aeronautical Charts: CH-25, CJ-26, CJ-27 and CK-27. For the instrument pilot you will need the L-6 and L-5 Enroute Low Altitude charts. It will be necessary to have the **Low Altitude Instrument Approach Procedures** book published by the Defense Mapping Agency Aerospace Center in St. Louis, Missouri. Another excellent guide for VFR pilots is Randal Agostini's *Caribbean Flite Guide*. The last address I have on it is, P.O. Box 191, Port Of Spain, Trinidad. Agostini also gives numerous bits of information concerning the airports of the West Indies. This would be a must for the first time pilot.

If I had to make a decision between flying in the States and flying in the West Indies it would not be difficult. In the States there would not be the unnecessary hassle with documentation. Every flight in the West Indies is an international flight, and therefore, must have all the paper work. But again, think of all those customs, immigration and tower controllers you do not get to meet personally in the Stateside system. When one gets acquainted with the Caribbean system and the men, he easily overlooks the paper work. The personal contact with aviation people is closer in the Caribbean. It is a good place to fly.

Chapter 11

(VIEWING THE SCENERY)

THE WEST INDIAN DILEMMA

One of the greatest virtues of the West Indies is the people and their historical culture. There are few places in the world which have had such diversification of events and epics in their history as the Caribbean people. In chapter 3 I discussed the fact that the French, Spanish, English, Dutch, Caribs and countless other cultures have left their marks on the culture of these unique people. The closer one comes to know the West Indian the more specific one can identify his unique cultural trademarks. One also begins to appreciate the West Indian because of his heritage.

In visiting the Caribbean one should never classify the people of the islands as having one culture. Each small island has its own unique history, its own loyalties, its own direction, and its own way of doing things. Of course, there are those cultural traits which permeate most of the islands, especially those islands of the eastern part of the Caribbean. But one must remember that each island has it uniqueness, an individual uniqueness which the islanders cherish very much.

The West Indies has a very colorful historical background. To understand any culture, one must first have a panoramic view of the history of the people. History is the factory of culture. The third chapter was a brief history of the West Indian people. It is imperative, therefore, to have a good understanding of the background of any people before one can truly understand their culture. In order to understand the West Indian one must understand the cultural relics of the past which have been left over from centuries of historical change. I believe the West Indies is a most unique place in the world for having so much change in so short a time. This is what makes the West Indian a unique individual.

CULTURAL FRUIT BASKET

When we talk about the West Indian people, therefore, we are talking about a historical archive of cultures. Each island has a different history. Islands such as Dominica, though, have three different sections of history. This island was at one time divided between the English, French and Spanish. The culture of each of these European countries affected the areas of Dominica which they possessed. As a result, the particular part of the island in the past which was controlled by either country can be seen in the culture of the people of that particular part of the island in the present.

One of the most evident characteristics that divided the English from the French settlements in the Caribbean was that of intermarriage. The French evidently had less scruples about intermarriage with the African slave descendant than the English, though many of the relationships never got to the point of marriage. In the northern part of Dominica, which was at one time ruled by the French, there are numerous black families today that have French blood. There are a number of very light colored blacks, or dark colored whites, and a lot of blacks with blue eyes. It is not uncommon to see a brother and sister that are literally as different as "black" and "white." But in the English territories, such intermarriage (or, "inter relationships") did not occur as frequently. The English did not cherish mistresses among the slaves as did the French. In many areas, therefore, it is not a matter as to whether one is "white" or "black," but what shade of color. To a great extent, therefore, color is not relevant.

Among whites physical identification is usually described by one's color of hair. At least, the hair is the primary identification mark of the individual. But in the eastern Caribbean the shade of skin is the major feature used to describe a person. West Indians often describe themselves as either "dark," "clear," or "more clear." However, do not construe this to be a prejudicial description. West Indians are some of the most unprejudiced people in the world. They are such because of the past history. One really does not go to the West Indies with a "white-black" concept of race. Such thinking has no place there. When there exists every shade of color from black to white, who is black or white? In other words, leave your prejudices at home when you visit these lands.

What makes the Caribbean culture intriguing, therefore, is its history. Most of the countries have not had just one colonial power ruling over them through the years. If England had discovered St. Lucia, or St. Maarten, and retained rule of the country through the centuries, then cultural studies of the people would be most boring. But fortunately, the West Indies has had the privilege of tapping from the cultures of several countries over the years.

Through years of global strife, the Caribbean lands were juggled from one world power to another. During each period of possession, the colonial countries injected their little piece of culture into the people. Therefore, what has resulted is a culture constructed with the sociological relics of France, England, Spain, Africa and other countries which have had their influences in a minor way. This is what makes the people so exciting. We cannot stereotype the West Indian. He is different; he is unique. That difference and uniqueness adds to his cultural richness.

INDEPENDENT, BUT DEPENDENT

Independence was the principal movement in the Caribbean for the 1970's and 1980's. There is an underlying surge - a momentum - to determine one's own future in the islands. For centuries the people have been used - exploited. That which other countries wanted out of the West Indies in the past was usually profit. People were manipulated to get gold, or cane or whatever. When all the profit was gone, the colonials looked at the left overs as a burden to bear. They said, "We will now grant you independence."

The West Indian does want to determine his own future. At least a great majority do. There are still those countries like Montserrat who want to hang on to the Mother Country. And really, who can blame those few who want to maintain economic ties with their heritage. Those who have already become independent have had their share of political and economical struggles. But this was their choice. This was why they wanted independence. They can deal with the struggles of politics and economics as long as they are allowed to determine their own future. And what is wrong with a people wanting to map out their own future?

There is a contradiction here in some islands. Antigua, for example, wanted to go independent for several reasons which contradicted their reason for wanting to go independent. One of those reasons was that they would as an independent country be eligible for more foreign aid from other countries and world benefit programs. In other words, they wanted independence in order to become more dependent. Not much consistency in this, but in politics one does not always have to be consistent.

A dentist in St. Vincent related to me another problem with the independence movement. In his words it was, "We want independence but we have no leaders." In many cases this was true. As soon as the day of independence came, there were those little demagogues who came out of the bushes to claim their right to power.

When Antigua went independent, the associated island of Barbuda wanted to separate itself as an independent country. However, there were only 1,500 people living on Barbuda. That number included every man, woman and child. (A few pigs and goats may have been thrown in to get that count.) At the time, they had no real agriculture. They had no industry. They had nothing. But they wanted to be their own independent country. At least there were those few big shots there that wanted such.

For some, the phrase should be changed to dependent-independence. When Grenada went independent, Gary, the elected Premier, became a hard dictator. However, he was out of the island one day and a man by the name of Bishop formed a military coup to take over. Mr. Bishop invited the Cubans and Russians to help him in his dependent-independent movement. But the situation in Grenada has since changed. Now they are dependent upon Uncle Sam for aid. So actually, "colonial" control does continue in the West Indies. The only thing that has changed is the manner by which it is administered.

A FREEDOM-LOVING PEOPLE

In understanding the independence movement of the Caribbean one must understand that the Caribbean people are freedom-loving people. The do not like dictators. And they do not like communism. It is only when the communists and dictators take advantage of an opportunity do they get into power. A communist government has yet to show any significant force at the ballot box in any Caribbean country south of the Virgin Islands. Jamaica was leaning toward Cuba for a period of time several years ago. But the power of the ballot box changed that and the Cubans had to go home.

West Indians cherish the power of vote. They are generally very emotional concerning politics. They like open speech. They like the vote. The reasons for this is that it took them longer than most countries in the world to acquire this right. They never want to lose it.

GEOGRAPHICAL TRAP

Yes, the West Indian countries want to go somewhere. But they do not really know where to go. Those who know where they want to go often do not know what it takes to get there. Lack of leadership, lack of education and poor economic conditions are things that make countries stand still. The typical West Indian country has its share of these problems. Trinidad and Barbados are on their way. They are twenty years ahead of the other east Caribbean islands, though Guadeloupe and Martinique are doing well under the aid of France. Places like the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are also two decades ahead of the typical West Indian country. In fact, as far as development, these countries must not be considered ordinary in the category of the typical east Caribbean island. The other countries are still in the midst of struggle for development. They need our consideration. Of course, there is Haiti which is on the bottom of the economic ladder in the Western world. It is the poorest country of the western hemisphere. All of the poorer West Indian countries have a long way to go if we would compare their economic destination with something similar to the standard of living of the United States and Canada.

Education, though, is the major hindrance to many West Indian countries. Ignorance continues to enslave many, even though all of the countries realize the necessity of education. They realize that an ignorant people can never be a free people. Nevertheless, I see hope here. The next generation will do better.

There is a cultural dungeon in the West Indies which is difficult to explain. It is a dungeon of hopelessness. "We've been living this way for four hundred years," the West Indian reasons. "The future doesn't promise much economic change." Many have unconsciously fallen into the despair of this curse of Third World fatalism.

The West Indian may have his own type of fatalism. He resents being stuck in the islands. Their dream is to get out. Why? The typical West Indian's ancestor was brought to the Caribbean against his will. Historical slavery did that. His world is thus relegated to a small island a few miles long and a few miles wide. There are no jobs on this island. If he escapes to America or England or wherever to receive a good education he has no place to use such education in his home country. Therefore, who can blame him for not returning with a Master's Degree in engineering to a two-hundred-square-mile world which has few factories that produce a little more than clothes or shoes. As a result of this environment, education beyond high school on the islands has become less important. Those who want to excel, go somewhere else and stay there. This "brain drain" has stunted the economic growth of the islands for decades.

There is the feeling that we haven't come very far in the last one hundred years, therefore, we are not going too far in the next one hundred years. Tomorrow will be the same as today which was the same as fifty yesterdays. "I'm going nowhere, so why try." As a result of this Third World fatalism, a flavor of pessimism grinds away at the culture. It is hard to be optimistic and energetic in a situation which offers little economic hope. People accuse the West Indian of being slow. But most would be slow if they had no where to go and no hope for a better tomorrow. In fact, you might not call it slow. It is only being content with your predicament.

This may appear to be a bleak picture of the West Indian situation. But this is the picture of the Third World. The West Indian, though, has dealt with his predicament in a marvelous way. He has developed a type of contentment which allows him to be happy with what he has. The concept of "getting ahead" does not drive him to hypertension in competition with his fellow man as it does the typical stressed-out American. He is not in competition with his neighbor. This is where the West Indian culture has an edge on American culture, if we want to digress to comparing cultures. In the Caribbean one enjoys life in contentment. In America, one endures life in competition and social struggle with the other guy.

The West Indian would teach Americans that there is disaster at the end of our materialistic road.

THE RASTA MAN

No discussion of the Caribbean people would be complete without something said about the Rastafarian movement. A true Rastafarian is an individual who lives completely off the land. However, there are few Rastas who go to this extreme. It is his desire to disconnect himself with the established life of society. However, many Rastas have become a part of the system while hanging on to their basic beliefs. Many Rastafarians do not seek jobs. Many have the pastime of smoking "the herb" (Marijuana). There are so many phases of Rastafarianism that it is difficult to categorize the typical Rasta. This is a social movement, though the true Rasta claims to admire a deity and practices his Rastafarianism with religious vigor.

In religious belief, there are actually two groups of Rastafarians. There is the group that accepts an Ethiopian religious leader (Ja) of past years as the center of their religious belief. There is also the group that accepts Jesus Christ. There are Rastas with one of the two beliefs scattered through the Caribbean. This movement has even spread to Africa and is prevalent in South Africa.

Some have wrongly compared the Rasta movement of the Caribbean with the hippie movement of the States in the 1960's. But this is not a just comparison. The hippies revolted against the "establishment." There were job opportunities and money and every other blessing of life for the hippie. The hippies just said they did not want anything to do with it. They revolted against the "established way of life" which they discovered did not offer them solutions to human relationships. (It is culturally ironic to study the history of the hippie going from rejection of the materialistic system, to the grown up hippie they call the yuppie who uses the materialistic system to its fullest.)

The Rastafarian movement is different from the hippie movement because it is based upon different premises. First of all, there are many Rastafarians that are highly educated. They left their islands to receive excellent educations in England, Canada and the United States. But they returned to their countries with no hope. There were no jobs which demanded their higher education. It would be years before the islands could catch up to their high level of education. Therefore, many just withdrew to the herb.

Secondly, the Rastafarian is rebelling against foreign rule. He does not like his country being a commonwealth state or possession of any country. If his country happens to be independent, he does not like his country or people being financially dependent upon other countries. He cannot change that economic interdependence which constantly goes on, so he revolts against it. His proof that he can live totally independent is to live with nature, dependent upon the fruits of the land. This is his answer and his proof. Many West Indians, consequently, look at him as an anti-social who is living in the bush.

The hard core Rastafarian movement tells us something about the people of the Caribbean. Years ago the Rastafarian movement had a very small beginning in Jamaica. Today, there are Rastas scattered throughout the Eastern Caribbean. However, they do not exist in the countries of Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. The economic opportunities of the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico do not produce the fertile soil for the Rasta philosophy of life. Castro would not dare let such happen in Cuba. And Haiti, I don't think most Haitians have even got as far as philosophy. On the other hand, the Eastern Caribbean islands do nourish an atmosphere for the growth of the movement. The growth of the Rastas in the eastern islands, therefore, tells us that many West Indians are at least receptive to the ideas which are promoted by the movement.

The Rastas tell us that the people of the Caribbean want to be truly free. They tell us also that the area has a long way to go before it can truly have political and economical freedom. The movement tells us that the people want to go it on their own; they want to call their own shots. All of these are noble desires. The Rastafarians, however, seem to be approaching social reform from a very radical position. In fact, I doubt they will have much effect on the general direction of the countries simply because of their approach. One cannot change things by remaining separate or isolated from the main stream of either cultural or economic development.

THE MOTHER COUNTRIES

Do not think that the Rastafarian's desire to throw off his colonial heritage is the general thought of the West Indian. When Black rule came to old Rhodesia in Africa, the government tore down the statues of Cecil Rhodes, after whom the country was named and after whom the country was economically built. But the West Indian would never do this. He has a deep respect and loyalty toward his original Mother Country. West Indians have this respect and loyalty even toward the United States which would not necessarily be classified in the area as a Mother Country. From the Virgins to Barbados, there is a loyalty to England, France and the United States, especially among the older West Indian populace. There is a loyalty toward the United States because of what it represents - freedom.

The United States politicians would do well to take notice of these small struggling countries. They want American's help, but they want it in a way that will allow them the right to retain their own self-determination. Americans would do well to recognize their independence, respect their self-respect and gently offer the way to development on the West Indian's terms.

Few Americans realized the cultural ties that were strengthened with the United States during the Grenada crisis a few years ago. The West Indian believes that if worse comes to worse, Uncle Sam will bail him out. This not only applies to their beliefs concerning economic feelings but also the political happenings. Grenada was in a tough situation at the end of the Bishop reign. The country was down and I know the common person out in the bush there felt trapped and helpless. He could do nothing against the guns of the Cubans and the anarchists who were taking over the country at that time. But in came Captain America and saved the day. The rest of the world will always call this an "invasion." But I would like for you to ask that terrified Grenadian farmer or shop owner what he would call it. After all, he was the one being delivered to chaos. No, it was not like Afghanistan, or Hungry, or Kuwait. Check your records. Are the American troops still in Grenada?

What this deliverance did for the West Indian was to give him reassurance. He always knew he had a big brother up north that would help out when things went wrong. That big brother delivered when one of their fellow countries was down. Such only strengthened this belief that they feel a part of the Americas and want to be taken care of. However, they want to be taken care of in a sense that self-determination is not endangered. And that is the way it should be.

TAKING THE BEST

In order to examine a culture one should be careful not to emphasize the negative side of the culture. Every culture has its negative side. We must examine that side in order to clearly see the culture. The more we understand the West Indian the more we can appreciate him. We discover how far he has come. And when we discover how far he has come we appreciate the people more for what and who they are. The true cultural anthropologist is not in the culture-comparing business. He takes every culture at face value. That is what the West Indian ask of us.

He also asks us to respect his beautiful islands and culture. He doesn't want to be looked down upon. He's had enough of that over the past centuries. He wants American friendship, not control. Americans should not be turned off by those few who are zealously vocal with anti-American jabber. The West Indian asks you to come to his land on your visits and vacations.

The West Indies is a place of contentment and peace. It is one of those places in the world where you can decelerate and appreciate life. You will come away thinking to yourself, "Didn't God mean it to be this way?"

Chapter 12

(SWITCHING TANKS)

ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN

Now let's get back in N8856P and climb up to 7,500 feet. That is were living really takes place according to pilots. Besides, if God wanted us to drive around in cars He would have put wheels on us.

The weather in the Caribbean is almost always beautiful. (I know I have said that before, but you won't believe me until you see it.) However, during the rainy season and hurricanes it can rain like you have never seen it rain before. As the trade winds blow from east to west, the moisture is forced up by the mountains of the islands in the Eastern Caribbean. The moisture in the air is cooled by the cooler temperature at the higher altitudes. It condenses. And what do you have? Rain.

The mountainous islands usually receive more than their share of heavy rainfall. The convection currents also form little cotton puffs of clouds over each island. The land mass heats up during the day but the water temperature remains the same. What happens is that the air over the land areas rises, and you guessed it, clouds form. It is a beautiful sight to see. There are little clusters of clouds sitting on top of each island as you fly down the chain.

BEAUTIFUL SIGHTS

I have always believed that the best way to see things is from high altitudes. Ask a mountain climber about that. During the first six months of our travels up and down the Lesser Antilles line of islands we had yet to see the Soufriere volcano on St. Vincent. Clouds always loomed there to block our vision. But one good day we were puttering down the west side of St. Vincent when we saw a break in the clouds over the volcano. We decided to fly through the hole in the clouds to the crest of this 3,864 foot wonder of nature.

Soufriere had erupted two years earlier with all its fury, covering the north end of the island of St. Vincent with a gray blanket of ash. As we sneaked through the clouds, I could not help but feel a little tense. (I think smoldering volcanoes always make people tense, especially when they are sitting across the table from you.) But as we broke through the clouds, we could see this mammoth beauty of nature. There it was, one big and black dome. It was like the top of a gigantic dome stadium. It looked like the black, bald head of Satan crouched down in the crater of this volcano.

FLYING, CARIBBEAN STYLE

Though flying in the West Indies always has its thrills, it also has its inconveniences. Maintenance is always a problem. My static system plugged up one time and that put a stop to the functioning of three instruments in the plane. When this happens one just flies by the seat of his pants. These unexpected things will always happen when you are off somewhere between nowhere and anywhere. There is never a mechanic there, so you do the best you can.

Getting the required annual inspection on an airplane in the Caribbean isn't all that easy. I had to go to Puerto Rico to get a clean bill of health on my airplane the first year we were in Antigua. Puerto Rico and Trinidad were the only two places that had an American registered A&P mechanic with a U.S. A&I Certification. But I didn't mind flying over to Puerto Rico all that much in those early days. It was good to get a taste of the western world. At the time, I never dreamed that one day I would actually be living in and operating from Puerto Rico. I visited the island in 1978 and Martha said that I had said at that time - I don't remember - "I would never live in Puerto Rico." But never say never.

CALL THE EXTERMINATOR

Sometimes things get down right exciting in Caribbean flying. For instance, we were 7,500 feet over Dominica one time in beautiful tranquility. Leslie was seated beside me and Jim was in the right back seat reading his Bible. We were flying along in all peace of mind when all the sudden Leslie started wiggling and wailing as if he had gone into convulsions. I quickly looked over and there was this centipede crawling up his left arm. It was time for excitement. Centipedes have a vicious bite. I tried to hold the plane level and straight while Leslie flopped around on the connecting end of his arm. Leslie and Jim both started the attack after the terrified critter fell off Leslie's arm and onto the floor. Feet were stomping and hands were flying everywhere. Dust rose from the floor as three sets of human legs stampeded after one lonely intruder. I thought we would stomp the bottom out of that airplane. Things really got tense for a moment.

Somehow, the centipede escaped our rampage and fled for refuge under a seat. (He probably wondered what kind of maniacs these were with whom he had hitched a ride.) We sat looking out of every eye for an hour until we reached our destination of Arnes Vale Airport in St. Vincent. Believe me, there was no peace until we got out of that plane.

After we had landed, I sprayed the inside of the airplane until it looked like a dense fog had set in. I was determined not to get back in there with that centipede. The next morning I opened the doors of the airplane to find Mr. Centipede's carcass curled up on the floor deceased. Beside him was the lifeless body of what must be been his brother. To this day I cannot figure out how those two creatures got inside that airplane. Who knows how long they had been stowaways.

Bugs are always a hazard in the Caribbean. There was the time I decided to work on my auto-pilot. Ever hear of Cooties? Well, there was a dead cootie in my auto-pilot mechanism. No telling how long that thing had been in their trying to fly that airplane.

I landed in Grenada one time and had problems with bees. These little creatures like to build their homes in the end of airplane pitot tubes. They undoubtedly wait around airports in the southern part of the Caribbean hoping for airplanes to land. When some unfortunate plane comes in, these little troublemakers go through customs, sneak past immigrations and go up to the airplane's pitot tube to build a home. It is there that they take up residence by building their mansions in the hole that is in the end of the pitot tube. Woe is unto the pilot who does not check the pitot tube in his pre-flight check, for verily he will take off and ascend without an airspeed indicator. Believe me, I learned the hard way.

CHEAP GAS

Sometimes gas is cheap, that is, to the thieves. For some time we had this problem with the auto races in Antigua. Let me explain this. Whenever there was a car race on the island of Antigua there would be a rash of gas stealing at the airport. These hot-rodders would use high octane aviation fuel to power their cars. Of course, such high octane fuel was not good for the cars, neither did it help them run better. Nevertheless, at the airport we had to lock our tanks or park the planes where they could be seen. But regardless of all our precautions, we still lost that precious and expensive aviation fuel.

TIME FOR A TWIN

Listen, I'll be honest here. I have a lot of faith in airplane engines. But when there's just one engine per plane, deep down inside there is that nagging feeling that that one engine might lay down and die when you are out there a hundred miles over water. They always said that the propeller operated as a great fan for the pilot. If you don't believe this, just watch a pilot's hand sweat when it stops turning. Well, mine hadn't stopped fanning yet, but there was always that possibility that it might.

When we were ten months into the extension work I formally announced that N8856P was for sale. We needed a twin. Martha said get one at any cost. I guess her faith was weaker than mine. The accident rate for twins is the same as a single-engined airplane. But at least for psychological reasons we decided to go the twin route. At least our passengers might have a little more peace of mind.

I began the search far and wide for a twin in the West Indies. But why is it that everybody wants to buy your airplane when it isn't for sale? And why is it that no one wants to sell a twin when you want one? Finding a twin in the Caribbean proved to be impossible. I knew I had to return to the States to sell N8856P and to find a twin. But the time to go was another problem. At that time in the extension School, I was conducting about two extension seminars a week. Something had to be done, though, so we decided to return to the States for a short furlough.

OUT OF GAS?

It is not a good practice to intentionally run a fuel tank dry in an airplane before switching to another tank. But sometimes one inadvertently does so when trying to use all fuel in an auxiliary fuel tank. Nevertheless, I should warn my passengers when I intentionally run a fuel tank as low as possible before changing to another.

There we were, cruising along under and over the clear blue with not a particle of land in sight. Jim Allen and I were returning from a trip to Dominica. We were about thirty miles south of Antigua. All of the sudden the engine coughs, spits and sputters. Jim's heart sputters a few strokes and coughs before you switch tanks and explain to him what's going on. He doesn't easily forgive me.

The Comanche we had operated on four tanks. It ran on two of the tanks at any time. I sputtered the engine at least three times while switching tanks out there over the water. I always thought it was interesting to note the different reactions of different people on this matter. My wife almost faints. Others get stiff. Some start an intensive stare, an indication that their whole life is passing before them. Then there are those who look, thinking, "Not now, Lord. I'm not ready." When you are over water in a single-engined aircraft I guess some passengers just get right excited about the powerplant sputtering when it runs out of gas. Even pilots get a little excited, especially when it comes unexpectantly.

It appears, though, that singles have had better luck around the Caribbean than twins. There was this one pilot in Montserrat who tried to take off half way down the 2,500 foot runway with a Piper Aztec. He didn't make it. As I mentioned before, there were those two who took off from Coolidge Airport in Antigua in a Piper Aztec and didn't quite make it either. Liat Airlines lost a twin Islander between St. Maarten and the Virgins. It was never found.

On the south side of the island of Antigua there was this pilot from Guadeloupe who was making his way home in a Cherokee Six. (This is a single-engined aircraft.) The engine went to sleep. He was going to land it on the beach, but the tourists were there having a front seat watch at this incident. So the pilot gave them a stunt attraction by landing on the water. He splashed his machine in, jumped out, doing a backstroke to the shore. Of course, that beautiful Cherokee Six bubbled to the bottom of the Caribbean.

So about this time I was getting real serious about buying a twin-engined airplane. Martha, the children and I, therefore, packed up in N8856P and headed toward the States. This was the summer of 1981.

When we arrived in the States we searched everywhere for the right airplane that would satisfy the needs of the extension program. I made so many telephone calls I think I developed a callous on my index finger and a flat ear shaped in the form of a telephone receiver. It was a time when everyone wanted to sell, but no one wanted to buy or trade for our plane. Deep down inside I knew that God would somehow make it all possible. I struggled on my own, however, without allowing Him to work in my life. So He worked my case.

We were on a deadline to get this business taken care of. I remember getting down to three or four hours of sleep a night. I was desperate. To say the least, I feel that God tried and tested me more during those days than at any other time in my life. I knew that He knew that I was an impatient person. And I am sure He was working to get that impatience out of me. But through much prayer, He delivered. We finally made a trade for a 1964 Beech Travel Air. (However, God is still working on my impatience.)

THE FLIGHT I'LL NEVER FORGET

While I was in the States I had one very exciting flight, the flight of my life. It was 6:30 PM and a most beautiful fall night. There was not a cloud in the sky. Darkness had crept over the heavenly canopy and I was waiting for a good friend, Jim Young, to fly up from Monroe, Louisiana to pick me up in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. I had flown our newly purchased Beech Travel Air (N5670K) there to have the instruments worked on by brother Tommy Tomlison of Tomlison Avionics. Jim was coming up from Monroe, Louisiana to take me back to West Monroe, from where we planned to soon depart for Antigua.

The sun had already slid over the horizon when Jim arrived in his Cessna Cardinal. After a little chat, the two of us were off and into the crisp evening air. It couldn't have been a more exhilarating night to fly.

Both Jim and I were instrument rated pilots. But there is always that lingering spook in the back of your mind about mechanical failures. Of course, those things always happen to the other guy. This night, however, we were the other guys.

We were at 4,500 feet and twenty minutes out of Pine Bluff when it all began. Both of us heard a muffled crunch. Jim, who was piloting the plane, didn't say anything. Neither did I. But we both knew that something definitely had unscrewed somewhere in the plane. The search for trouble lasted about ten seconds. As soon as our searching eyes saw the oil pressure gage we knew we had problems. It was on zero. Jim was immediately on the radio to Monroe. "Mayday! Mayday! We've lost oil pressure and will try to make it to Crossett Airport." Crossett was about ten miles away.

I started looking for places to land amongst the forest of trees and darkness below. (I again yearned for a bedsheet.) The engine ran for about five or so minutes and finally came to a screeching halt. We both silently concluded that we were in definite trouble, now. Our number was up. But I can honestly say that I was not afraid. Jim can speak for himself. I just knew that we would somehow come out of this in good shape. Therefore, we calmly went through those procedures we were trained to do as pilots.

(I had challenged death before in my life. I remember one time as a teenager in Preston, Kansas where I went to high school. My brother James and I were going through high school in this small town of Preston, Kansas. There were only about 350 people in the entire "metropolitan" area. One day after school, I was racing down one of the back streets of town in my father's 1956 Chevy pickup. My brother happened to be rushing down another street with a friend in this friend's car. The friend was driving. The only problem was that these two streets were joined at an intersection. They slammed into my right side at the intersection of the streets. Back then we didn't know what a seatbelt was. The pickup I was in was thrown around and up, striking eight feet up on a telephone pole. I was thrown against the door on the passenger's side of the pickup. I gashed about a six inch slit in my head. I fell out of the pickup in a daze. Neither my brother nor the friend he was with were hurt. They hauled me off to the doctor, sewed me up and I was back in school the next day.)

Now Jim and I were over the forest of southern Arkansas in an airplane with a dead engine. This is real trouble. We were sailing around up there wondering were we would land. In the night below I had seen a car drive through the darkness over to our right. Jim made a 180 degree turn and we descended against our will. We found the road and were flying straight down it, but we were a little to the right. We were at about two hundred feet, now. The road, however, just disappeared. We were too low to make a 180 degree turn back to the road to try to find it again. So, it was straight ahead into the trees. That last thing I saw was the giant pine trees rushing up into the landing light. It was crash, bang, boom after that.

We made it, though, alive! I knocked out a tooth. Jim, unfortunately, broke both legs, evidently when we hit a three-foot-high stump on his side of the plane when we came falling down out of the tops of the trees. He did a great job, though, of placing that Cardinal right between the big trees. It wasn't too good for the wings, but if we would have hit one of those giants straight on it would have been the end of us.

I jumped out immediately and dragged Jim from what used to be a great looking Cessna Cardinal. Gas was dripping somewhere and I knew we needed to get away from that airplane. I made sure the Emergency Locator Beacon was on and we left the plane for dead.

Now back in those days Jim wore a toupee. In all of this excitement, he was worried about that toupee. After I had dragged him from the smashed airplane with his legs all busted up, he was concerned about that toupee. When I laid him down about thirty feet from the wreckage, he said, "Roger, Roger, could you go back and get my toupee." So here I went, back to scrounge around in the dark for a patch of hair amidst the mangled carcass of what used to be called and airplane. Jim's explanation for this incident today is, "Well, I didn't want the rescuers looking around out there day after day, wonder what happened to that **third** man."

As soon as I made Jim as comfortable as possible, I stumbled out of the woods to a road and flagged down a passing car. (I am sure it wasn't a coincidence that the family in the car were members of the Lord's church in Crossett.) We were in the emergency room of a hospital within 45 minutes after the crash.

Jim had a few steel pins put in his legs. I got a new tooth. But we're both glad to be alive. God had delivered both of us from the face of death. Evidently, He had better plans for us in the future.

What had happened to the engine was the disintegration of the oil pump gears. It was times like those that made one thankful that he has a meaningful relationship God.

TESTED AND TRIED

A week after the accident I was back in our Beech Travel Air and ready to head back to Antigua. I wanted to get out of the States before I got killed.

We returned to Antigua from the States on furlough ready to go to work. When we returned, however, things really started happening to strengthen our patience and faith. I guess our Father knew we needed to grow in these virtues.

In those first few weeks after we returned it seemed as if a mechanical gremlin went to work in our lives. Martha had to wash by hand again. The washing machine went on the blink. It was times like these that I admired her strength. Not every wife in these modern times would contend with such. The refrigerator also decided to have its turn of problems. The problem with all mechanical things is that they are mechanical. And mechanical things break.

We were back in Antigua only a few days from furlough when the car started giving up its faithful nature. The water pump went out. The car had to just set because the parts to the water pump had to be flown from Germany where the thing had been manufactured. The car was down for a week or so. It was our only means of getting our children to school, therefore, this meant that they did not go to school. You guessed it, they could not have been happier. Our last resort for transportation was the motorcycle. So for about two weeks it was our only means we had to get around.

I suppose we needed a little more patience. About three weeks after we had returned from furlough, Martha and I had to use the motorcycle to go to All Saints Sunday morning for the meeting of the saints. The children had to stay home. We left the house with me driving and the teaching supplies on Martha's back. We headed down the quarter mile of dirt road which led away from our house. We turned on to a narrow paved road and started down a hill and around a curve. When we came around the curve there was a car coming up the hill right in the middle of the road. We swerved to miss the car, but instead, hit the bushes on the side of the road. Something caught the front wheel of the motorcycle and down we went. Splat, all over the pavement. I hit first and Martha landed right on top of me. That was good for her, but not so good for me.

Martha and I skinned ourselves up pretty good. My face hit the pavement. I won't go into what I looked like. She skinned her feet, but having landed square on top of me she was spared total contact with the pavement. With all the scrapes and bruises, for a week we looked like something out of a Frankenstein movie.

GROWING IN FAITH

After being back from furlough for four weeks, I was ready to go on furlough again. But I can understand better what Peter is trying to tell Christians in 1 Peter 1:6,7

"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Therefore, we praise God in times of trial. Trials of this world keep us dissatisfied with the world. And after all, are we not to be longing for the place where we will no more have tears and sorrows? It would be a wretched world indeed if we had not the hope of heaven. I am truly sorry for those whose hope lies only in this world and terminates with death. But thanks be to God for the hope that is an anchor to our souls.

Chapter 13

(LEANING THE MIXTURE)

RESTARTING

While we were on furlough in the States in 1981 I had resolved to make some changes in the extension program. I wanted to reach out to some new areas and make a greater dent in Satan's kingdom in the West Indies. A desire to always improve on a work has always been one of my vices. Martha always said that I was not content with what was going on. Admittedly, she was right in some areas. I always wanted to change something in order to try to make it better. This sometimes got me in trouble. I remember when we were first married. She had secretly worked on a small desk for me as a Christmas present. It was a two-week effort for her to get it repainted and ready for the big surprise. When she gave it to me, I was excited but made the fatal blunder of saying, "This is great, I could probably change this ...." Well, what can I say. That statement has haunted me all these years.

Nevertheless, one change I wanted to make in the extension program was to spend more personal time with the West Indian church leaders. I did not think I could make disciples unless I was with the disciples. What they had lacked most in their lives in maturing as church leaders was someone to discuss new ideas or events that were going on outside their island location. We had discussions in our seminars but we were not able to deal too much with personal problems. Most of the preachers had been working alone since they began preaching for churches. And as every preacher knows, there comes a time when he wants to talk preacher talk with other preachers. The seminars did offer an opportunity for the men to get together to do just this.

The seminar environment was a great opportunity for all of us to get together and talk about the work. I remember having some very long discussions concerning problems and dreams of the men as they struggled to build existing churches and start new churches. One of the frustrating things the teacher always has in extension work is that he cannot spend the amount of time with the student that is needed to make a formidable impact on the student's life. This time is sacrificed in order for the teacher to be able to touch a greater number of people. Because of the system, we were touching the lives of a great number of people. However, our contact with each individual was brief.

WORKSHOPS

I made a commitment in 1982 to conduct congregational workshops at least once a month in order to edify local churches as a whole. This type of workshop would involve a Friday through Sunday arrangement with specific churches. This was going to take me away from the local work in Antigua, but I felt that the work in Antigua had sufficient contact with missionaries to keep it edified and growing. There were more than fifty other churches throughout the Caribbean which needed attention and prayers. The workshops had always been a shot in the arm for local churches and I wanted to give more shots.

MORE PRINT POWER

The need for Bible-based literature in the Caribbean was awesome. This same situation prevailed in Brazil and every mission location to which I have travelled outside the U.S. Anywhere the church is poor financially there seems to always be a dearth of literature. And the churches with which I worked in the West Indies were poor.

While in the States on furlough I asked churches everywhere to send us literature. I wanted any type of literature they could give. I did not care what they sent. We would and did use almost everything that landed in P.O. Box 7, All Saints. I placed some pleas in brotherhood papers and we received everything from 1940 *Gospel Advocate Quarterlies* to copies of poems. We used almost everything that was sent. The West Indian Christian enjoyed it all.

We kept receiving books from all over the United States. We stacked them in Matthew's room until I could get them hauled out to the churches. The boxes of books and materials were stacked everywhere. He lived in a storeroom.

On every trip out, we hauled thousands of pieces of literature. We could have used tons more, but we could not convince enough people that the need was so great. One thing I have never been able to understand about American churches is the fact that though they depend so heavily upon printed literature they cannot be moved to distribute great amounts of literature for world evangelism.

I once heard the story of a missionary who travelled through a train depot somewhere in Europe. He left his Bible in the terminal building while he was getting his baggage together to catch the next train. One year later, he received the Bible in the mail. (He had his address in the Bible.) A small note had been carefully tucked inside the leaves which read, "Sorry we kept your Bible so long. It took us longer to copy it than we first thought."

WRITING AGAIN

I had also committed myself to write several series of lessons for the churches in the West Indies. As I mentioned before, one project was to write a one-volume commentary on the New Testament. One of the problems in working with Third World countries is that the membership of churches are usually poor. Therefore, they cannot afford to buy the books at prices Christians pay in the States. For several years I wanted to produce a one-volume commentary that could be economically distributed throughout the world. This writing project, plus several others, consumed a great deal of my time in 1982 and 1983. I kept telling myself what all writers of religious materials must keep telling themselves. The materials they produce will influence a thousand fold more individuals than what one can do in his personal contacts. When the scribe is dead, the inscribed lives on.

In was in the West Indies, therefore, when I began the production of the programmed courses which are used in the School today. We first produced the materials on a spirit duplicator. We graduated to a mimeograph machine and then on to a copy machine. Each course has gone through several revisions. The final printing of all the courses was first made in Cape Town, South Africa. By then all courses had gone through four to six revisions. While I was in the West Indies, I wrote over **one thousand pages** of programmed material and other related literature which we used in the School.

BUILDING IN ANTIGUA

At the end of 1981 all of the churches in Antigua had decided that 1982 should be the year to get the church into some permanent meeting places. So an intense effort was begun to build or buy buildings. We had all let ourselves believe that stability of the church in a country depended upon a permanent place of meeting for the church. We had also let ourselves believe that church growth depends upon church buildings. Well, neither do, but it is hard to convince ourselves of this when there is the urge to build.

The Villa church in St. Johns had been meeting in a school house for over a year and a half. They were ready to move into something more conducive to "church edification" and "stability."

The All Saints church had been meeting in a union hall for a little over a year. My family and I were meeting with this particular church. Believe me, we were ready to move out of that union hall into some kind of building that did not give you a shower every time it rained.

The Liberta church had the same problem as the church in Villa. They had been meeting in a school building for about a year. As it turned out, we united the church in Liberta and All Saints. We built a building between the two villages and merged the churches.

We struggled with the idea of church buildings for some time. We went over the pros and cons of the building matter for months. There were some problems that constantly plagued us. (1) Good or bad, the Antiguan people had been raised for hour hundred years with the concept of a church building as the center of religion. We were known as the "group in the union hall," or "the ones meeting in the school." The communities did not look at us a permanent group in the community because we had not yet put down any roots. (2) The members of the churches were ready for permanent facilities. Rented halls and houses were fine for a start, but it seemed that the church would not feel a sense of establishment until it had its own permanent facilities. (3) Meeting in the homes of members was not practical in Antigua. Most member's homes would seat about five to eight people. In a village situation, it just was not practical to have five or eight people meeting in one house and a block down the road have another five to eight people, an so on. (4) Our fourth problem was that we wanted a place where we could have offices, literature storage, fellowships, and classrooms. (5) Another problem centered around a government regulation. People could not become legally married unless they were married in a building which was registrared for such with the government.

When it comes to building a building in a Third World country, there is usually little chance that the national Christians can pay for the type of building we Americans would like to build. The only other source of money is to the raise the money from the States. The Antiguan Christians could pay for the land and begin a building fund from which initial payments could be made. However, help from other churches had to be raised. This always opens up problems in one's efforts to establish an indigenous church.

One thing we did do in raising U.S. support was to demand that the national churches support a large percentage of the actual building funds. This gave them the sense of having sacrificed for the building. When we got down to the actual building, we were really surprised as to what the Antiguans could really do in sacrificing for the buildings. All of the churches gave more than we thought they could. Our problem, I guess, was that we had faith in the figures, but the Antiguans had faith that God would provide. We walked by figures, they walked by faith.

I want to add here that it is always best to operate with the economic and cultural confines of the national environment. I do believe that churches can be established within any given culture without the practice of "robbing other churches." In the initial stages of church planting, the missionary can get away with the practice of importing funds from outside to support himself and do some indirect work for the establishment of the infant church. However, it seems to be a general principle that the longer the outside funds come into a local work the more handicapped the established church becomes. When we moved to the West Indies we found that those churches which had been supported for long periods of time by outside funds, actually grew the least, if they grew at all.

PRESSING ON

Our return after our first furlough in Antigua, therefore, was an exciting time. We had a fresher look at the work. We had made some new plans. In those first months after our return, God graciously granted unto us victory after victory in the work. The church buildings were completed. The church grew. To this day, my faith continues to grow as I look back on how God worked mightily in our lives to accomplish so many victories for His glory.

The fresh look with which we saw the work after our returned, reinforced our belief that missionaries should take furloughs from their work. One often becomes more tense than he thinks in a particular work. The many responsibilities of mission work are not few. And too often, the zeal and self-initiative of the missionary gets him in trouble in this area. It is not that he should stop. Maybe he could slow down. But I am sure Paul had something like this in mind when he said that we are "fools for Christ." Sometimes, we missionaries may be just fools. Nevertheless, it is hard not to do with all your zeal that which you love to do. It is not work. It is a joy to be doing what you feel God wants you to do. I would not want to do anything else. And, right now, I do not really want to do it any slower. However, my body continues to slow me down.

Chapter 14

(CRUISING IN PEACE)

DEALING WITH THE TRUE PICTURE

As time passed, the work in Antigua and the West Indies became more fulfilling as we began to see the results of our work. It was exciting to work with the West Indian leaders. It was fulfilling to challenge them to establish more churches and to train established churches to be more evangelistic. Like a lot of things, though, one always wants to do better. However, you never seem to have the time to accomplish everything you want to do. At the time, I wanted to conduct more seminars than I had the time. I could do this by being away from home only two or three days a week. My office was in my home, so this allowed me time with my family while I was doing preparation for the seminars.

The need for preacher and leadership training in the mission field boggles the mind. This is especially true in a culture that does not get all that excited about doing anything. So the need for training leaders in the Eastern Caribbean churches is to some extent a unique task, though the cultures of the Western Caribbean are somewhat more aggressive. In the Eastern Caribbean we always had trouble getting men to lead out. In the west

(Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti) it was a problem trying to keep unqualified men out of the leadership position.

KEEPING BUSY

The more time I put into the extension work the less time I could put into the local work in Antigua. And as the local demands increased in Antigua, the other missionaries had to devote more time to the Antiguan churches. This left me virtually alone in conducting seminars. But this also allowed me the time to be away from the local work of Antigua without having to return to fulfill obligations at home base. This arrangement worked out quite well. In fact, I would advise anyone who is going to do this type of work to have few obligations at home base. Extension work is a fulltime job. One will have to make the choice of working with one congregation or many that need his guidance.

By mid 1982 I was working with about fifty churches which had an estimated total membership of about 3000. It was hard for me to leave this tremendous opportunity in order to concentrate on one or two churches in Antigua which had twenty-five to thirty members each.

I involved myself completely, or at least ninety-five percent of the time, with the fifty churches. I remember one month when I had nine leadership seminars both in and out of Antigua. The following month I had eleven. I later backed off from such a schedule. It was too tiring and I was away from my family too much.

Much time was spent in prayer in those early days. In the infancy of new churches there are always those problems which need special prayer. On one trip, for example, Jim Crisp and I went to Grenada to see how things were fairing. The church was still divided there over several problems. But almost all of the problems stemmed from one man who had a history of church problems. At that time he was causing no little disturbance in the church of Grenada. It took much prayer before this problem was straighten out because it had developed over a period of about five years. But finally the one causing the trouble moved out and the church has had perfect peace ever since. It was situations as this one, however, that kept us on our knees.

In Antigua at the All Saints church we had a men's retreat in January of 1982. We escaped to a small island - it was about a hundred yards long and fifty yards wide - off the coast of Antigua about a half mile. It was just us and the birds on the island. We slept in a cave. The Antiguan men cooked the food. We took several hours to make plans for 1982 for the church in All Saints. We prayed. We called upon God to work in our lives in the saving of souls in Antigua. It was a great retreat and one that brought us closer together and closer to God.

N5670K IN GOOD HEALTH

One of the major concerns I had in all my travels was keeping our Beech Travel Air in healthy condition. It was the only thing between us and the deep, blue ocean.

Therefore, I spent no little time at the airport making sure everything was plugged in and gummed together. I kept a list of things that needed to be done and when I had time, I made sure it was done.

Keeping the airplane in good shape was a hobby of mine. I did not have any other hobbies that would keep my mind balanced so I would go out to the plane and scrape off some corrosion, or tighten a screw. The plane saved my sanity on a few occasions.

There was a charter service at the airport in Antigua that owned a 1960 Beech Travel Air. The owner and I always compared notes on machines. We kept one another informed on all Airworthiness Directives - these are maintenance bulletins - that came out on the Travel Airs. We helped one another out on maintenance. He helped me more than I could help him.

Our plane was running good and I felt good about it. I never liked being in a flying machine I did not feel good about. Neither did I like to own one that I did not know from one end to the other. It seems that a week never went by that I did not feel grateful to God for the airplane. I knew we could not do the work we were doing without it. I suppose that is why God blessed us with it.

Let me expand on the above point here. There are some tools in mission work that are necessary for the existence of mass evangelism. In the extension evangelism we were doing in the West Indies, the airplane was as necessary as a printing press is to a printing ministry. But it was difficult to convince most brethren in the States that it was. Because of that lack of understanding, we had to fight against no few obstacles in order to keep the extension program going by keeping the plane in the air. When we came to the West Indies to begin the extension program, I scrapped up every dime we had to buy the Comanche. Life savings, cashed in life insurance and all went into the plane. When we traded for the Travel Air we had almost saved enough to pay for the difference between it and the Comanche. An understanding church - the church in Stafford - with an elder who owned an airplane, helped make up the difference. We appreciated so much those brethren who did understand and who kept the School in the air through the years.

Few brethren really understand the true nature of foreign mission work. Even fewer understand aviation missions. At the time we were operating in the West Indies, we were the only church of Christ mission effort in the world that used an airplane. I know of a denominational group that uses twenty-eight planes in Zambia alone. Why are we always so far behind in equipment and methods?

GRENADA AND COMMUNISM

Let me insert another statement here about Grenada. (I love this country and have had a deep concern for it ever since that first campaign I had there in 1972.) I believe the Grenada situation before the U.S. deliverance is a good example to manifest at least some of the environmental aspects for the work in the Caribbean.

It is amazing how the social atmosphere and political environment of the islands affects the minds of the spiritually weak. I suppose this is because the spiritually weak concentrate too much on the things of the world. But this is also true of the church in general. We as the church should not let the environment in which we live affect our thinking. We should be affecting the environment.

In the Caribbean islands I have seen both good and bad effects of environmental influences upon the church. In 1979 Hurricane David ripped through the country of Dominica with devastating winds of over one hundred and fifty miles per hour. It was the worst hurricane to hit the island in history. After the hurricane, there was a spirit of reconstruction. Combined with the natural disaster, there was the election of a new government. It was a new government in which the people had a great deal of confidence. This environment of reconstruction and governmental beginnings united the people and produced an optimism that was not characteristic of previous years. I remember brethren in Dominica telling me that people felt more religious or were easier to discuss religion with in those times than before the hurricane. The church had a greater sense of urgency. The spirit of growth was in the hearts of the members. Such was a good effect which was produced by the environment.

However, negative environmental influences can hurt the church. Previous to 1968, the small country of Grenada was in political peace. The country gained its independence in 1974. A tyrant of a leader was elected as head of government. This government was later overthrown by a coup. The leader of the coup began a propaganda campaign against the free world, especially the United States. Marxism was introduced. Russia and the Cubans were given the right hands of fellowship and the troubles began, not only in the country but also in the church.

The attitude of the people of Grenada was definitely changed. I conducted month-long campaigns in Grenada in 1972 and 1973. The receptivity of the people was just great in those years. Though the church was in an infant stage then, it was growing. I am told that it grew to about four hundred members during the years from 1974 to 1976. But the influence of political turmoil had its influence upon the church. As the influence of Marxism increased, all churches were indirectly discouraged. Religion is just not a part of Marxism.

Bitter strife had entered the church in those days. The political atmosphere only added to the problems in the church. West Indians take their politics very seriously, much more seriously than Americans. Therefore, when the political environment is in trouble, there is stimetimes troubled feelings religious world. In Grenada, it seemed that the trouble in the church intensified soon after the political environment became tense. This may have been just a coincidence or it may have been the influence of government on the church. In a Marxist state, there is always the influence of government on religion. Nevertheless, the membership of the church fell from the known four hundred members to about one hundred and fifty.

This same political influence upon religion also occurred in Dominica. This is the reason I say that political disturbances in the eastern countries of the Caribbean usually have a negative affect on religion in general.

But things changed in Grenada. Peace was also restored in the church. The government has since been changed. The work of the church there has begun to grow. The leaders are in harmony once again and it is indeed a heart warming joy to see the fellowship they have among themselves once again.

WEST INDIAN LEADERS

During the years of the School work in the West Indies it was a great opportunity to have extensive contact with the churches of the Lesser Antilles as a whole. This contact allowed me the opportunity to develop an overview of the churches and their needs in general. It also allowed me the privilege of being acquainted with some of the great leaders of the West Indian churches. What was so encouraging was to see these leaders rise head and shoulders above any problem in order to proclaim Jesus. Many continued faithfully preaching the gospel under great poverty.

One of the great qualities of the men was to labor year after year in the same church and in the same environment. Preachers in the States have the opportunity of "changing churches" every few years for one reason or another. But in the West Indies, you do not have that privilege. Our hats go off to these men in the Caribbean who have labored faithfully and consistently for years in an area where times are hard and struggles in evangelism are often difficult.

PREACHER ATTITUDES

The attitude of the preacher always affects the attitude of the church. This can happen in both a positive and negative manner. Attitudes in the West Indies are generally positive. One aspect of the School curriculum which I failed to include sufficiently at the beginning of the work was concentration on leadership attitudes. There were some general attitudes that gave the West Indian churches special problems. One of the most common attitude problems was the "tribal chief" concept of preaching or leading a church. This was the attitude that the church is run by the preacher in every aspect of work. He makes all decisions for the church. He is the hub of activity.

It is hard to determine the roots of this chief-rule practice among West Indian churches except to say that it comes from African tribal roots. Governmental and civil authority among almost all tribal groups of Africa was invested in the chief of any particular tribe. The concept of democracy to my knowledge did not exist among most ancient tribes of Africa. However, the one-man rule system may have developed from the "pastoral system" of the denominational world from which many of the preachers had been converted. One could be led to believe that the only source of this problem comes from the denominational background of church leaders except for the fact that the same concept of leadership seems to rise up in the governments of the countries themselves. Even though the governments have been patterned mostly after the parliamentary system of England and other mother countries, there is constantly a power struggle going on somewhere within the government of Caribbean countries.

It is also possible that this form of one-man rule came from the "king-queen" system which prevailed in the British and Spanish systems of government for centuries during the colonial control of the West Indies. Though England and Spain have long turned to a democratic form of government, the old order of government of the mother countries of the West Indies may still linger in these past subjects.

But again, the concept may have originated from the nature of the environment in which the West Indian church leaders have to function. At the beginning of the churches for which they preach, there were no leaders to make decisions. They were the only leaders. They were the pioneers. If any shots had to be called - and there were many - then they had to call them for the church. You cannot blame them for having to call so many shots and then becoming accustomed to it.

Whatever the origin, there is the definite principle among West Indians that one man should take the lead. This one man should be allowed to be the decision maker for the people. Only a few churches have broken away from this system. I believe this break away caused church growth in those churches that have given up the chief-rule system of decision making. The sharing of responsibility always encourages individuals to grow, and when individual Christians grow, churches grow.

Another attitude with which we began to work was the attitude that the church leader must continue to grow in knowledge of the Word of God. One preacher who had been in the Caribbean for twenty-five years stated, "We've got too many Caribbean preachers who went off to school and learned how to quote Acts 2:38 and then thought they were preachers. They received their diplomas and returned home never to study again."

This was a definite problem when we arrived in the West Indies in 1980. West Indian preachers have a great ability of saying nothing in much speaking. I believe they developed this because of a lack of challenge. They could deal effectively with denominational doctrines, but that drive to dig into the Word of God for personal development and enrichment was not all that common. When the Members saw no growth in the preacher or challenge by the preacher, they often became lethargic. Therefore, what the Caribbean had\has are many churches which have zero growth because of the zero growth of their leaders. I believe that this one problem was the principle cause for non-growth among many Caribbean churches.

Another basic attitude that was causing problems was a sense of cultural inferiority. This was a common feeling among many West Indians. They looked down on themselves and were quick to respond to any who would look down on them also. It is a situation where they are materially down and not necessarily proud of the fact. They want out of the Third World situation but cannot get out. This was expressed by Premier Bird of Antigua at a Miami meeting of U.S. officials who were surveying the needs of the West Indies. He said, "People tell us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. What we are asking for in this meeting is that you help us to get some bootstraps."

West Indians generally have few possessions of this world. Of course, there are some advantages to this. However, it is hard to convince the "have nots" of the advantages of their plight. As a result of their material inferiority, many are ashamed to let a visiting American come into their homes. They felt that the American might look down on the few things they have. Some also have the concept that Americans do not have to work all that much for what they have. I remember one time when I was visiting Barbados about twenty years ago. I was riding in a car with the manager of a local hotel. We stopped at a crossroads in the countryside and I eagerly put my camera out the window like any tourist to take a picture of some men working in the cane fields. To my surprise, the men started giving me the once over for taking their picture. Of course, I was puzzled. The hotel manager kindly explained to me that they felt it a disgrace to work. The workers did not want me taking my pictures of them back to the States and showing other people how they had to work so hard in the Caribbean in order to make a living.

WEST INDIAN CULTURE

West Indians do not know exactly how to deal with Americans. I suppose their "cultural inferiority," as they see it, makes them back off. When American campaigners go to the West Indies, the American aggressiveness often intimidates the local brethren. Americans speak loudly; West Indians speak softly. Americans are quick to make decisions; West Indians think it over. Americans walk swiftly; West Indians glide slowly. Americans sanctimoniously obey the strictures of organization; West Indians let things flow according to the needs. Americans work on the front side of the hour; West Indians work on the back side, way back. Americans who go on campaigns in the West Indies would do well to slow themselves down to about first gear, speak softly and consider relationships more important than time and organization.

I would say that the above differences are characteristic of the culture of the Lesser Antilles and not the Spanish countries of the Greater Antilles. We must not stereotype the Caribbean islands. We must never compare one island culture with another. Each country has its own unique way of life. Though there are many similarities, there are many differences. Some cultures, such as the Dominican Republic, are very aggressive. On the other hand, there are those as Dominica which are not so aggressive. If you have the opportunity to visit the West Indies, accept each island country as it is. Do not try to compare one with the other. Each country is proud of its culture, and rightly so. This fruit basket of culture is what makes the West Indies such an exciting place to be.

Economically speaking, I believe the best is yet to be in the Caribbean. As the independence movement sweeps across the islands, the people gain a sense of pride, a sense of self-determination. Countries are wanting to make it on their own. And in a world of freedom, they have that right.

I do believe that the West Indian lives in a situation that is more conducive to spiritual growth than his materialistic neighbors to the north who become bored if every minute of every day is not filled with TV or some activity. West Indians are not bogged down in the mire of materialism and "activityism" which has so marred the American culture. There is not the feeling, "Well, the Joneses have it so I must get it." Or, "That is the 'in thing,' I must get it." Or, try this one, "We just can't do without that."

In an atmosphere where materialistic tensions do not exist so strongly, there is more time to place one's mind on relationships with people and God. In an environment where one is not trying to entertain himself with activities, there is more time for personal involvement with people. More time can be given to the spiritual aspects of life. This is why I believe the typical West Indian has a greater sense of spiritual matters than his North American neighbors.

Attitudes, therefore, always determine the effectiveness of the work of the church in a particular country. Cultural attitudes must always be considered when building a church. The Caribbean is a melting pot of culture and thus a conglomerate of cultural attitudes. That is what makes it so exciting to the cultural anthropologist. Where else in this world can one find a completely transplanted peoples from several different cultures of the world unto one area. This is the Caribbean. This is the struggle in which these small countries are engaged in order to make their mark on the world itself.

Chapter 15

(CHANGING COURSE)

TIMES FOR FAITH

Every mission work goes through times of trial. And those times of trial often involve money, support from back home, that is. We were about to go through such times in the School during 1982. These were going to be trying times. However, they were going to be times for faith. During this year we thought our boat was going to sink. I never was much for sinking boats.

Four of us missionaries were out in a small boat one day beating against the waves of the Caribbean. I sat there soaked to the core and someone asked me if I felt safer in an airplane than in a small boat out there in the ocean. I unequivocally gave my undeniable and assured response that I did. There's something about the sea and small boats that do not quite mix.

I guess I was still suffering from my first unexpected adventure upon the great seas which seven of us had experienced only a few months earlier in a small boat. We had decided to take a little spear-fishing expedition to a small island about one mile off the southeastern coast of Antigua. We used this small boat for the venture which I am sure was made for cruising in swimming pools. It was about twelve feet long and sat low in the water. Nevertheless, we all jumped in and puttered across the calm waters on the leeward side of a small island.

Our excitement about fishing did not last long. We were heading in the direction of the spear-fishing location, staying on the leeward side of a long island off to our left. We were out about a half mile from Antigua when we hit the wind and waves as we came around the end of the island that was protecting us from the waves. That little boat filled up like sponge in about one minute. All of us except one man jumped overboard to keep the boat afloat. Fortunately, it was one of those types which would not sink completely because of the styrofoam which had been built into its structure. But it did sink to about six inches out of the water.

There we were, six men hanging over the side of a boat, clinging to it with one arm and paddling away with the other. One man stayed in the boat, running the half submerged engine. We were a quarter mile or so from land. I knew that Paul must have felt something like we did somewhere around Malta. I wondered why I was there hanging on for dear life.

We limped the half-sunken vessel over to a small island. We were completely exhausted, but thankful that we had made land. Our next chore was to dip out the boat and ring out our drenched sandwiches. (Have you ever eaten a salt water sandwich? I was hungry.) A few minutes later, an Antiguan fisherman came along sitting on three logs which were tied together. He yelled out, "All of you can't get in that boat. It will sink." I have since wondered how he thought we got a half mile off shore to the beach of that small island on which we were stranded.

GIVE ME AIR, NOT WATER

There is something unique about flying over the ocean at night in a small airplane. It's an oblivious feeling which cannot be painted with finite words. It's a tranquility which surpasses any ecstasy of those limited to the confines of earth.

Angella and I left St. Kitts at nine o'clock Sunday night after a seminar and headed back to Antigua. I had taught a session in Nevis the night before and that Sunday morning. Angella had taught the children to keep them occupied during my classes. This allowed the mothers an opportunity to pay close attention to my lectures. We flew over to St. Kitts that Sunday afternoon for a session with the church in Basseterre Sunday night.

It was a beautiful Sunday night when we left St. Kitts. N5670K left mother earth at ten minutes till nine. The moon had hidden itself, but two lonely stars peered through the blackened haze that soon separated us from the confines of terra firma. I could barely see the towering volcano mountain of Nevis which lay off to our right, piercing through moonlit clouds awaiting any unsuspecting pilot.

As we neared five thousand feet on an IFR clearance out of Golden Rock Airport, there was the blackness above, the blackness below and the blackness ahead which we cautiously penetrated on our way toward our home destination. There was a certain eerie loneliness, a certain restless challenge of a man and his trusted machine to confidently conquer the established elements of nature that encompassed him with a panorama of infinite darkness. I had all the confidence in the machine and just enough in the man to make the tension enjoyable. Only pilots can understand this.

CHALLENGED TO CHALLENGE

Such challenging experiences often sharpen the gut feelings of any missionary pilot. I have not met a missionary yet who did not have a sense of quest for the unknown and an unending hunger to conquer it. I know Paul was that way. There is that vibrant drive, that unquenched desire to spy out the unknown land. There is that vision to plan the strategy and thank God for the victories He is about to give. It is always a relentless challenge to put into practice the truth, "**We walk by faith . . . .** "

At one time in his travels, the apostle Paul wanted to enter a temple where a crowd of idolatrous worshipers had shouted themselves horse in tribute to a pagan god. The brethren had to physically restrain Paul from entering the temple. They knew that he would probably be beaten to death if he had entered. But later in his life he stated, "*I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.*" Paul was made of the right stuff. And it takes that right stuff to make good missionaries.

Missionaries haven't changed in two thousand years. They are still struggling to enter those dangerous temples, those nations and tribes where Jesus is yet to be preached. There is a certain stamina of faith, a definite courage that makes them go on. It is often misunderstood by those who do not understand. Indifference and retreat are attitudes which are incompatible with their nature. Opposition to the first makes them a restless breed. The opposite of the latter makes them a struggling wonder which drives them to spit in the eye of the Devil while kicking out his teeth. And with God's help, the Devil will be toothless before the last missionary lays down his sword and stops kicking.

MISSIONARY CHILDREN

People often ask Martha and me about rearing children in another culture than the American culture. The nature of the question is an answer to the question. We must remember that the American culture is only one culture out of thousands in the world today. A better way to answer the question would be to say that it is definitely advantageous to rear your children in more than one culture. Children who have grown up in a situation which allows them to be bilingual and bicultural have a definite advantage over those who do not have such privileges.

While in Brazil our children learned Portuguese and the Brazilian culture. Though they have now forgotten much of the language and culture, they still remember Brazil. They still have some Brazilian cultural traits hanging over into their present life.

Living in a bicultural situation broadens a child's mind. One's perspective of life in our international world is greatly aided in growing up in a situation where one is made to recognize other peoples and their ways. One of the greatest lessons one can learn is that the American way is not the only way. And sometimes, it is not the best way.

I have always believed that a child growing up in an international situation is blessed with such experiences that are worth at least a year or two of college. The education of my children has been aided by growing up outside the United States. And contrary to what many make themselves believe, American schools are not always the best. America has a lot to offer, but it does not offer everything that is offered by the world. It is only one nation of a world of many nations and cultures. I think it best to be a citizen of the world, not just one country.

WALKING BY FAITH

In June of 1982 I was again sitting in the Miami Airport. I had been sitting there four hours, waiting for a delayed BWIA flight back to Antigua. I had sad news to take home and knew Martha would be as disappointed as I was concerning the news, for she knew how important the School was, both to the Caribbean church and to me.

The news was the total loss of support for the program. The work had essentially been supported in the last two years by the generosity of one beloved Christian businessman. But economic recession had hit hard in the States. Bankruptcy was declared by a company from which stock was received to support the School. And thus, that was the end of our support. Come September, the last of the monthly support would be sent. I knew, though, that God would provide something. Our's was now a true mission of faith and I figured God wanted to exercise our faith muscles to see if we really believed in the work.

LITERATURE KEEPS COMING

Concerned churches in the States poured literature down to us by the thousands of pieces. At times we received a box every day. One time we received eight mail bags in one day. The need was so great for literature that at times everything we received was distributed out within two to three weeks after we received it.

We were receiving thousands of tracts. We needed millions, so the thousands went fast. I was hauling out the materials as fast as they came in. All was going well until the airplane developed propeller problems. I had to take the propeller off and send it to Miami for repair. In the process of shipping, it was lost. I panicked. After about two weeks of phone calls and search it turned up in the Miami customs house, tagged for public auction. This ordeal put the plane down for about two months. I had to cancel half of our regular trips in the extension school because commercial flying just could not get us to the diversity of locations which was possible by use of the plane. We could only take a fraction of the necessary materials on each trip with commercial flights. The literature, therefore, really began to stack up in the house.

While the airplane was down, most of the literature was stored in Matthew's room, which later became the permanent storeroom. One day I built some shelves in his room which reached to the ceiling beside his bed. The first night he slept on the floor, halfway under his bed. After I found him the next morning sleeping on the floor, he said that he thought the shelves might fall on him during the night, so he slept on the floor

Our house increasingly became a warehouse and workshop instead of a house for living. Angella's room became the printing room where printing and copying equipment was located. This was in conjunction with the dining room which also housed a printing machine. Of course, Matthew's room became the main storeroom for most of the literature. The utility room became my office. A bathroom was turned into a library for books and a darkroom for film development. Martha's and my bedroom became the storeroom for boxes of Bible school literature which we used for Antigua. Everything else went into Cindy's and Lisa's room. The kitchen and living room were spared all intrusions except on occasions of great need. I thanked God that we were able to rent a house with sufficient size to function with our work. I also thank God for a wife who recognizes the value of a work more than the convience of a "nice" house.

CUSTOMS OFFICIALS

All of the importation of literature allowed me the opportunity to become acquainted with the customs officials of Antigua and of the other countries of the West Indies. But customs officials have an innate ability not to be friendly. I believe I could pick a customs official out in a crowd of a thousand people. He would be the one with the snarling frown who would be asking everyone he met, "Do you have anything to declare?"

Every airport in the Caribbean has a unique group of custom officials. Most are great guys. Some are not so great. Grenada, for example, was being indoctrinated with anti-capitalist, anti-American propaganda back in the days when Bishop had control of the government. It was the only airport tower that would ask me my purpose of visit while I was still in the air on approach. An atmosphere of suspicion was bred throughout that land in those days.

In April of 1982 the ousted dictator of Grenada, Gary, made a telephone call to the ruling military junta of Grenada and said he was coming back to Grenada to take over the country once again. Well, it happened that two weeks after the anxiety-making telephone call had been made, I was flying in with several boxes of literature to conduct an extension meeting. On this particular trip, I had several pieces of anti-communist literature stuffed away in the bottom of the boxes.

When it came to customs, I smiled with an ear-to-ear grin, said, "Good day," and whistled under my breath as the customs official thumbed through the materials. He never made it to the bottom of the boxes. I went through customs and on my way.

We never received enough literature dealing with Christianity and atheistic communism. What we did receive went in the hands of key church leaders in order to prepare them against the ever infiltrating clutches of this demonic philosophy.

8,000 FEET AND CLIMBING

By the end of 1982 we had extended the work of the School into fifteen countries of the Caribbean. We had established about ten churches by working through national leaders. We were at that time adding Haiti and the Dominican Republic to the list of countries. My Spanish abilities increased sufficiently to the point of conducting several seminars in the Dominican Republic. In Haiti neither my Portuguese nor my Spanish would work. Fortunately, a good brother by the name of Joseph Albert was able to translate my English into French Creole. All in all, the work had expanded far beyond what we had first dreamed.

God always provides in times of need. At one time when we felt the work would be wiped out because of finances, someone left us five thousand dollars in a will. I remember once when we were at the end of the line again and a foundation came through with over four thousand dollars. To say the least, my faith has increased because I have had to walk by faith. I have also seen God work hardily in my life to accomplish that which I have felt must be done in His kingdom.

I have never really been the type to sit around looking for the dew on the fleece. I have always believed that God would work with you in any noble effort to do good in His kingdom and for His glory. I have made my plans based upon what God has generally told us to do in His Word. I then pray and ask for His wisdom and work in my life to carry out my feeble plans. I cannot say that He has ever failed to come through. And I can look back and see by faith that He has brought forth fruit to my fallible plans and talents. "*We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*" (Romans 8:28). A great inspired writer once wrote, "*Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith*" (Galatians 6:10). Therefore, let us search out for good to do to all men and then get after it.

Whether our "good" be to a small struggling church on some remote island or the teaching of a neighbor across the backyard fence, we must always press on to accomplish it. We have not yet learned the meaning of the phrase "turn back." We must always press on, on to the goal that is set before us. To God be all glory for any victory we accomplish on the way to our goals. To Him be all honor, for it is by His providence in our lives that we conquer. It is by His helping hand that we are able to struggle over the cliffs in order to reach the mountain peaks.

Chapter 16

(RESETTING THE AUTOPILOT)

GOING WEST

By the first of 1983 the opportunities for work in Haiti and the Dominican Republic came alive. I had also made a trip to Jamaica where we introduced the School. The problem, however, was that these locations were too far away from Antigua to make any regular trips feasible. It was four and a half hours flight from Cap Haitien, Haiti to Antigua.

Funds for the work were diminishing to the lower half of the bottom. And frankly, I was just plain tired. I needed a rest. Therefore, Martha and I decided to move back to West Monroe the summer of 1983 in order to rest and raise funds for a move of the International Center from Antigua to one of two different locations.

SANTO DOMINGO OR SAN JUAN

During our last year in Antigua, Martha and I studied Spanish at the Venezuelan Cultural Center in St. Johns. We knew we would move to a Spanish-speaking country sometime in the future. We had two choices: San Juan, Puerto Rico, the city I said I would never live in, and

Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic. At the time the first choice on the list was, Santo Domingo. Therefore, we loaded up our family and went to Santo Domingo for a three-week survey trip of the area.

We thoroughly enjoyed our stay in Santo Domingo. John and Dulce Cloward showed us tremendous hospitality. At the time John was an engineer working on a canal project for the government and Dulce was doing her painting. They welcomed us into their home for three weeks and loaned us their car to tour the country. They were really twisting our arms to move to Santo Domingo.

One of the things that impressed us about the Dominican Republic was the outlandishly low prices for food. The cost of living was actually half that of Antigua. We even ate steak, something we never had in Antigua. We ate fresh cucumbers, tomatoes and eggs. Angella, Matthew, Cindy and Lisa were thoroughly impressed with this new land that was so different from Antigua. It was truly a land of milk and honey compared to the Third World environment in which we lived back in Antigua.

It was a hard decision to make between the two cities or countries. Both offered their advantages as a location from which to do the extension work. But San Juan won out after a year of deliberation. Cindy once said to me, "Daddy, you don't ever listen to us. We all wanted to go to Santo Domingo, but we ended up in Puerto Rico."

One of the principle reasons for moving to San Juan was the advantages we would have in basing the airplane there and operating out of an airport which had good maintenance. I was a little tired of operating an aircraft under conditions as Antigua and wanted to get back into the American system. San Juan also offered the easiness of getting into the country. No visas were required.

THE LAST EXTENSION TRIP

When we made the decision to move back to the States the first of 1983, I started shutting down the School program in the eastern part of the Caribbean. I made my last visits to almost every teaching point. I was deeply moved by the undeserved gratitude expressed to be my the preachers and church leaders at each teaching point. This caught me by surprise. Most thought they would never see me again. Our affection for one another and mutual understanding had grown beyond what I realized. We had spent a lot of time together in planning and teaching. We had grown close. As it has turned out, I have not seen many of these good men since I left in 1983. However, we will meet in heaven. For that, I am truly grateful to God.

It was hard to leave Antigua. But Martha and I knew that we needed a change. I had gone too long without a rest from the grinding schedule of extension trips and course development. And I confess, I was burned out.

We thus sold everything we own in Antigua and boarded N5670K and headed for the States.

TEACHING AND RECRUITING

In West Monroe I resumed my efforts of teaching and recruiting missionaries. I took the opportunity to accomplish a great amount of writing on the *International New Testament Study Commentary.* And I joined the computer age. We plunked down the money to buy a CPT word processor. This was one of the greatest decisions I have ever made. To a writer, it was a dream. I never wanted to touch a typewriter again after a few weeks on the computer. The amount of time this marvel of modern technology has saved me is almost the lifetime of a secretary. Every missionary should have a computer. Such a machine will save him countless hours on the field.

BREAKING A PROMISE

Remember when I swore off motorcycles. I repented in Antigua. While in the States I bought this brand new Honda 450 down in Baton Rouge and rode it all the way back to West Monroe in forty degree weather. I almost froze. I had on two pairs of long Johns and two pairs of pants. I had on three shirts, a sweat shirt and an old army overcoat. I still froze. I was proud of this little gas saver and was planning to take it to Puerto Rico as I had taken a Honda to Antigua. Motorcycles were handy to use in the tropics and convenient to get where a car could not go.

I cruised around in West Monroe for about three months on this "murdercycle" as someone called them. And then there was that fateful day. I was headed toward the tennis courts. Lisa, our youngest, was on the back with a helmet that joggled on her head. We were floating down a main street in West Monroe, at about forty-five miles per hour when this car pulled right out in front of us. There was no way I could stop without sliding right under the car. I was going too fast to dodge to the right or to the left. It was a time for quick decisions.

(This reminds me of the time my brother James almost killed me back on the farm. We were hauling a load of hay to the pasture one day. There were two tons of bailed Alfalfa on this four wheeled hay trailer which was hitched with a ball hitch behind the truck. In order to get into the pasture we had to go down a deep ravine which had a very steep incline. As the truck began to go down the steep incline, the ball hitch of the trailer popped off the back of the truck. The trailer came to a stop right at the top of the incline.

We were in a fix. My brother decided he would back the truck up the incline and I would hold up the trailer hitch. Well, he put that truck in reverse and came ripping up that hill like a spooked bull out of a barn. I suddenly realized that he did not know where he was going. I dropped the hitch of the trailer and dashed for the ground. The back end of the truck scissored across the front end of the trailer. When the dust settled, he came meandering back to see what had happened. I wasn't too Christian back in those days. I cussed him up one side until he was raw and down the other, spitting dirt and leaves out of my mouth with unrighteous indignation. He never raised his voice. In fact, I never remember him raising his voice to me when ever I was infuriated at him for what I believed was some of his nonsense. That always intimidated me to no end.

All he said after almost cutting me in half was, "Well, let me drive the truck up a little and you get on the hitch and hold it down while we go down this incline." It was like it had never happened. What can I say. Nevertheless, I was naive. So, he eased the truck forward about four feet and I set the hitch on the ball of the truck. It didn't fit well so I sat on the front of the trailer to hold it down with my feet. He started down that ravine like that crazy bull again. About half way down the hitch popped off again and fell to the ground. As it dug into the ground I was thrown off the trailer right in front of the two tons of hay which was building up speed. When I hit the ground my feet were at least clocking ninety miles per hour. It was one of those times that the instinct of preservation comes to the surface and takes control. You can do remarkable things. I dived like Superman for a clump of trees and crashed into the sticks and rocks to "safety." I survived.

Here came my brother James again. "What's going on back here?" I believe I added a few words to the vocabulary of unrighteous words that day.)

Lisa and I were headed for certain disaster on that abominable motorcycle. Quick decisions could not deliver us. I held the motorcycle straight and headed for the rear end of the car. We hit and the both of us went flying through the air. She hit the pavement on her head and then her side, cracking her arm. If she had not been wearing a helmet, who knows what would have happened.

I hit flat on my back, smashing three vertebra. I was in intensive care at the local hospital for five days. I swore off motorcycles again. I knew I had to get out of the States again before I got killed.

READY TO GO HOME

During the year I was in the States I was able to make a trip back to the West Indies in order to visit some of the works there. When I returned to West Monroe after the trip someone asked me, "Isn't it great to be back home here in West Monroe." I told them I had just gone home and now I was in a foreign country.

Being an American by birth and passport has always made it hard to explain to Americans that home to me is not America. I would never be totally American after having lived in other cultures for so many years. Even if I would have to live in the States the rest of my life, I would always be part Brazilian, West Indian, and now, South African.

These feelings often make me uncomfortable in America. It is something that is hard to explain if you have not experienced them yourself. These feelings were laying hard on me in the spring of 1984. I was ready to return to the work in the West Indies. I was revived and ready to go. In August of 1984 we moved to San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Chapter 17

(INSTRUMENT TRAINING)

PUERTO RICO

Our two years of work in Puerto Rico seems so long ago today. I must confess that our time there was a tough test of work and family. It was not the best environment in which to rear a family. It was a good place to base the School and to work the Greater Antilles. The family in the States which we had recruited to join us could not raise their necessary support, and therefore, could not join us. This changed some of our plans. But this is a common thing in mission work. Missionaries come and go. So many are unable to raise their support because of the "unmissionmindedness" of Stateside churches.

FIRST TRIP TO AFRICA

During our first year in Puerto Rico the White's Ferry Road church sent me, with two other men, Royce Sartain and Paul Kehoe, to Ghana in Africa. They had made a commitment to the Ghana Bible College to send a team of teachers over for special seminars three times a year. This was right down my alley. It was a trip that would turn my attention to a continent which had great receptivity and great possibilities for the extension of the School.

One thing that impressed me about the Ghanaian brethren was their intense desire to evangelize their country. There was a spirit of evangelism that permeated every church. At the time of my first visit, they were establishing about three churches a month.

I have since made many teachings trips to this country. In 1988 there were well over four hundred churches in the country. And at the time, there seemed to be no end to the growth. Today, we have over one hundred preachers and teachers of the country enrolled in the School.

ANOTHER LONG TRIP

On August 23, 1984 all six of my family loaded up in N5670K and left West Monroe bound for San Juan, Puerto Rico. After a brief stop in New Orleans, we headed across the Gulf of Mexico to St. Petersburg and then on to Miami. We spent the night in Miami with the Bill Longs, with whom we have spent time almost every time we travelled from the West Indies to the States. Their hospitality has been tremendous through the years. In all of our travels, I suppose we owe more to the Longs than any other family. They are true friends of missionaries.

Once again we headed out from Opa Locka Airport for a new round of work in the School. After leaving Miami, we had flown for about three hours when we approached a line of thunderstorms that went from one end of the heavens to the other. This line of storms was too high to go over and too low to go under. We couldn't turn back because we didn't have enough fuel. The only course we had was to go straight through. Our intended destination was Grand Turk which was just on the other side of this line of goblins.

I had been in a lot of thunderstorms, but this was the worst, not because of its severity but because of the amount of time we were in there. Lightning was striking everywhere. It was raining so hard that we could not see outside the windows to the wing tips. The noise against the windshield of the airplane was so loud that we could hardly hear one another even though we yelled. We bumped and were thrown against our seatbelts time after time. Lisa looked back at Matthew and his eyes were, according to her words, "**big.**" Matthew later said, "I was scared." One can usually penetrate a thunderstorm and come out on the other side in five or six minutes. We were in this storm bank for thirty minutes. I was totally exhausted when that big monster finally spit us out.

We were about ten minutes from Grand Turk after our escape. We landed and headed for the bathrooms. We had about two and a half more hours flight to Puerto Rico. It was clear and blue all the way. God knew we had had enough. When we landed in Puerto Rico, I was beyond exhaustion. I had been flying for eight hours. I had fought a demon in the Devil's Triangle. It was then that we met one of the greatest couples we have encountered in our lifetime, Jorge and Bobby San Pedro.

Their hospitality was so needed that night. We stayed with them for several days after our arrival and they ministered unto every need we had.

Jorge was a Cuban and a salesman for Kodak. He and his American wife, Bobby, had been converted in the States and had moved to Puerto Rico about a year before we arrived. They were great servants of the Lord and proved to be some of our best friends.

LITERATURE TO DISTRIBUTE

While we were in West Monroe, I had put out another plea to churches to send us as much literature as possible for the West Indian churches. We collected over **ten tons** of literature. We took about half of that to Puerto Rico. The rest was sent to Ghana.

One of my tasks in Puerto Rico, therefore, was to distribute about five tons of literature to West Indian churches. Most of the material was in English, so we could use little of it in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Spanish was the language of Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. French Creole was the language of Haiti.

STARTING A CHURCH

Before we went to Puerto Rico, we had planned to start a church somewhere in San Juan. Jorge and Bobby had the same vision. As our friendship grew, we decided to start a church together. Therefore, in January, 1985 we began in their home what was later referred to as the Rio Piedras church. This church was later aided in growth by the arrival of five workers from Miami. Octavio de Armas led this group and did a great job in leading the church in preaching and teaching.

WE BOUGHT A HOUSE

In Puerto Rico, we searched diligently for a house. There were few houses to rent. Renting was not the Puerto Rican way. It was a custom to buy, therefore, few houses were for rent. Martha and I spent about six months looking for the right house.

We needed a large house for literature and office space. God delivered. We purchased a house from a Puerto Rican brother who had moved to the States. It had a large garage which I converted into a large office. I learned how to lay cement blocks and tile. I do not know if I learned all that well, I just did it.

SETTLED IN

After a few months in San Juan, we were settled in and working. God continued to watch over us. We needed Him daily. The social environment of San Juan was much different than anything we had experienced before. Crime was high because of the drug trade. I believe San Juan is a good example of a culture that has given itself over to the proliferation of drugs. In this city, the good folks are kept behind bars in their homes and the bad guys roam the streets pushing and using drugs.

San Juan is a city of drug gangs and crime. A nineteen year old Christian young man came up from St. Vincent to receive training at the Park Gardens church in San Juan. After he had been there for two weeks he was walking down the street alone in the late evening. Someone just came along and shot him in the head. He was killed instantly. No one has ever been able to determine why he was shot. It was just one of several senseless killings that took place in San Juan every week.

I would never vote to legalize drugs such as marijuana. The use of such leads to theft by those who must support their habit. In the schools of San Juan most of the students have used some type of drugs. Many are in the business of buying and selling drugs.

This was a very difficult environment for our children. It was difficult for the young people of the churches of San Juan. Few of the San Juan churches had many young people in the teenage years.

Regardless of the hardships of the environment, we were determined to serve the Lord. We had planned to reach out to the Dominican Republic and Haiti. There were about sixty-five churches in the Dominican Republic and about forty in Haiti. North Haiti was showing signs of real growth. Several denominational churches had been converted there. There was a great need for Bible teaching. Most of the leaders who were converted did not even know the books of the Bible.

Chapter 18

(FLIGHT PLAN FOR HAITI)

A GOOD WORD FOR A GOOD LAND

I made my first trip to Haiti in June of 1983. I have made many trips since and for numerous reasons. Haiti is shocking. It is revealing. It is romantic. It is poor, very poor. Americans have a hard time understanding it. It is a country of extremes, both politically and economically.

PAPA AND BABY DOC

Haiti's political history has been everything Americans do not understand about politics. In 1957 Francois Duvalier (Papa Doc, they called him) decided that he wanted to own a country. He was initially elected but in 1964 he set himself up as "president for life." His life ended in 1971 and his son, Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc), was "elected" to the presidency. It wasn't long after that, however, that Jean-Claude decided he like the royal palace as a permanent home. So, he declared himself "president for life." That declaration lasted until 1986 when the people finally decided that they had enough of the dictatorial Docs. They sent Jean-Claude on a hurried excursion to the French Riviera. Haiti has struggled ever since with attempts to establish a democratic society.

HAITIAN ECONOMICS

In 1982 I had one of those opportunities that I never dreamed I would have. I was invited to go on a cruise of the Caribbean as a guest speaker of the Caribbean Christian Cruise Lectureship. Darrel Frazier, who has carried the tradition of director of the cruise after the untimely death of his father, Hal Frazier, invited me to accompany them on this particular cruise. I was elated, but Martha was a little despondent about the matter because she could not go. However, she was able to go the second year we were in Puerto Rico.

This particular cruise had a schedule to stop in Haiti. It is hard to understand poverty. You can see it on television and read about it in newspapers and magazines. But none of these media adequately communicate the desperation of the Third World in poverty. This was evident when the cruise group landed in Cap Haitien, Haiti for an all-day visit with the church and culture. Most of the American cruisers were aghast at the sights of the poverty-stricken. Many cried that night when they reboarded the ship of our protected world for the elite and blessed.

Jesus said, "*The poor are always with you.*" Saki said, "The poor have us always with them." As we approach a decade where three in five inhabitants of this planet live in what we would classify as underdeveloped nations, we must be unendingly grateful to God for His blessings to America. Americans have so much and know it so little.

I want to make one thing perfectly clear. Poverty does not necessarily infer unhappiness. Nevertheless, there is a certain fatalism in poverty stricken cultures. There is often a desperation for survival when one's daily purpose is to find enough food in order to make it another day in a miserable life. But, if Haiti is any indication of most of the poor, they have happiness. However, most Haitians are just above desperation to appreciate the real values of life. This cannot be said for many poverty areas of the world. It seems that the Haitians are not concerned by the futility to acquire happiness through things and events. There is more concentration on individuals and relationships. After all, poverty can never take away relationships. In fact, relationships are often enhanced by a common spirit for survival in an environment of poverty.

THE PLIGHT OF THE POOR

Now you must bear with me for a moment in order for me to help you understand the environment in which many of your brothers and sisters struggle in order to evangelize. Le me unfold to you the real poverty of this world. "Poverty is the open-mouth, relentless hell which yawns beneath civilized society." So said Henry George in *Progress and Poverty*. And so it is true today in the Third World.

The word "plight" according to Webster, is "a condition, state of affairs, or situation; especially now, a

dangerous or awkward situation." And that's exactly the situation of the poverty stricken environment of many of our Third World brethren. Milton expressed the predicament, "This miserable loathsome plight." Just ask anyone of those millions who scrounge each day for another morsel of food and he will thoroughly agree that his plight is miserable and loathsome and awkward and dangerous.

Jesus did remind us that the poor are always with us. And how right He was. The poor, the materially destitute, have always been and always will be. I guess that's just life. And life can be so cruel.

But most of you who are reading this book will not be able to identify with what I am saying. And I can write about it but never really understand the plight myself. Poverty, real poverty, is only something materially wealthy people read about. And admittedly, it is difficult to even write about, even though one has seen and lived with the worst of poverty the world has to offer. And I have. But none of us have ever lived like the poverty stricken of the world today.

Breecher said, "Poverty is very good in poems but very bad in the house; very good in maxims and sermons but very hard in practical life." Yes, to some it may be easy to write and talk about. But it is still that "relentless hell which yawns beneath civilized society." In *New Seeds of Contemplation*, Thomas Merton reminds us, "It is easy enough to tell the poor to accept their poverty as God's will when you yourself have warm clothes and plenty of food and medical care and a roof over your head and no worry about the rent. But if you want them to believe you, try to share some of their poverty, and see if you can accept it as God's will yourself!" Yes, it is easy to preach about poverty, but perilous to practice it.

We all have our stories about how rough we had it in the "good ole days" when we were growing up. It seems that poverty is a condition you try to hide while you experience it, but brag about after you have experienced it. Someone once said, "I was once so poor I used to buy a pint of milk for breakfast and a loaf of bread for dinner, and eat them both for supper!" And then there was the good man who bragged, "I wasn't born in a log cabin, but my family moved into one as soon as they could afford it."

I guess there were some advantages to those days, those days when poverty was an allergy that made us unusually sensitive to paper money. It was an economic condition that kept us from going anywhere but in debt. After all, back then your income tax was so small you never had to borrow to pay it. And your car keys were never in your other pair of pants.

Why is it, though, we never recognize those blessings of poverty until after we have experienced the poverty? And why it is that most people do not realize the deplorable situation of the poor of the world? Why is it that we have erected a barrier between ourselves and the poverty reality of the world? Why is it that we feel threatened by the "have not" countries who supposedly are trying to "get our money"?

I spent four years living in a country - Brazil - where poverty was real. I have visited other countries where it is even worse - maybe I should say sickening. The income per person per year in Brazil back in 1975 was $1,140. However, over **thirty million** in that country lived at the same time on an average income of $77 per year. Those two figures should give you some indication of the tremendous separate between the rich and the poor in Brazil.

The world's produce, I am told, can support only twenty-five percent of the world's population on the standard of living as that enjoyed by the average American. And Americans are in that lucky twenty-five percent and enjoying all that which they feel is their right to have. But the "have nots" want a piece of the pie. They want to lift their badly fed bodies out of the pits of agonizing hunger. And who can blame them. If you had four or five hungry children at home, what would you want? What would you believe? What would you do? Desperation often moves fathers and mothers to do things they would not normally do.

Have you ever had the wretched experience of having a mother or father dig through your garbage can in order to find something to feed their children. I have ... several times. You just want to cry. Most of the time in the developed countries it is a dog or cat that upsets and digs through the garbage cans. In the Third World, it's people, people with starved bodies.

In Brazil they were called *molecos*. These were those three to ten year old children that roamed the streets begging for food, many times having no home to which to return at night. Over 600,000 poverty-stricken people were living in houses of scraps of cardboard and tin when I was in Brazil. Yes, the rich shipped expensive things around in packing crates to put in their houses. The poor used the crates **for** their houses.

It is a deplorable situation in the Third World, out there in the real world. And most of us who lived in the "carpet world" want it to stay out there. We cry, "Don't bring us any more boat people." "Keep the wetbacks out." "They'll take our jobs." Yes, some of us could care less because we understand less. But "out there" is the real world. This is **our** real world, a world of relentless poverty. John Worral, a newsman in Africa, wrote back to his newspaper, "Millions sit idly outside mud huts, crushed by crop failures due to drought or floods, wondering when they can eat again. Women are treated like cattle, slogging in the fields with babies on their backs. Children with bellies swollen from protein deficiency play in the dirt." The next time we grumble about the high cost of food at the food store, let us thank God that we have a food store to grumble about.

I do not have any answers for the poor of the world. There will always be those of us who close ourselves in our fancy homes with filled refrigerators in order to isolate the pleas of the desperate. On the other hand, there will be those of you with tender hearts who will feel for the millions who live in malnutrition. May your concern move you to tears, to thanksgiving, to sharing and caring.

I sincerely feel that we need to be constantly reminded that God has truly blessed us. We need to thank Him that we happened to be living in a blessed spot at this particular time in history. After all, I could have been born in a mud hut in the middle of Ghana. Forty thousand people will die today because of malnutrition. Those of their friends and family will battle to find that next piece of bread, that next apple core or potato peeling which will allow their starved and swollen bodies to continue until tomorrow. Their whole purpose of life has dwindled to find that morsel of food that will get them through another day. And after today, maybe another.

CHURCH GROWTH IN HAITI

In June of 1977, Joseph and Denise Albert knew that God wanted the church started in the northern part of Haiti. Joseph was previously a school teacher who taught French, English and Spanish. He was contacted and converted by Wesner Pierre in Port au Prince, Haiti. In July 1977, Joseph and Denise moved to Cap Haitien to start the church.

The beginning has hard. Joseph once told me, "I knew that God wanted me in Cap Haitien." For the first two months he could find no place to rent. He and Denise worshiped alone with their four children. By September of 1977, a small room was rented in which to meet. Joseph went from house to house, preaching and teaching, working alone.

Times were hard. Satan continued to work against this great worker. In 1979, Denise died of cancer, leaving Joseph with four small children from three to eight years of age. Nevertheless, he struggled on.

Joseph was receiving some support from Port au Prince, but that was discontinued. Joseph's uncle paid his rent and provided some food in order for him to survive and continue.

The White's Ferry Road church of Christ sent Russell Dupont to Cap Haitien the first part of 1979 with the intention of starting the church in the city. No one knew that Joseph was there. As brother Dupont was walking down a street in Cap Haitien, he noticed a sign which read, "The church of Christ." He stopped and talked at length with this pioneer named Joseph Albert.

As a result of that meeting, World Radio financed a radio broadcast, and Joseph was on the air in 1980. After a few weeks of broadcasting, Satan was once again after Joseph. A delegation of supposed religious leaders of the community sent letters to the Minister of Religious Affairs in Port au Prince to get Joseph off the air. As a result, Joseph had to go to the capitol to explain himself and what he was preaching. When he stood before the Minister, he said, "Sir, these religious denominationalists charge $2.00 for one to be baptized. I preach that you should charge nothing. They charge people fifty cents for partaking of the Lord's Supper. I preach that you should charge nothing." The Minister wrote out a letter, authorizing Joseph to preach anywhere in Haiti that he so chose. (God will give the victory if we will only stay in the battle.)

Joseph had sold his house and car in Port au Prince in order to move to Cap Haitien. He dared to dream of a church there. God worked with him. He purchased land to accomplish the dream of establishing a Medical Clinic to administer to the physical needs of his people. In 1982, he purchased a few cement blocks and laid a symbolic foundation. When I visited Joseph for the first time back in those days and saw those few blocks. I doubted his dream.

July 1987 marked the tenth year of Joseph's work in north Haiti. As a result of God working through this man of God and many others like him, there were eleven churches in north Haiti in July. Ten of them are in their own buildings. There were six Christian schools being conducted in the buildings of these churches. The Medical Clinic building is completed, having been staffed since 1984 and ably directed at that time by Jerry Myhan. A jobs program was introduced in 1984 by Jim Stradley. God had brought a dream to reality. I am convinced that we often do little because we dream little.

PERILOUS POLITICS

In January 1987 I was in Haiti for a two week stay. The purpose of my visit was to conduct a Bible study seminar for about sixty church leaders at a camp we had rented on the north coast of the country. About two months before, there was a massacre of about thirty-five people at a voting station in Port au Prince. This stopped the elections which the country was going to have after thirty years of governmental dictatorship. The ruling military leaders were blamed for the atrocity. They did not want the elections to continue because they would be put out of power.

The atmosphere was tense at the time I was there. No one was making any future plans. No one wanted to make any commitments because of the instability of the political situation. I believe this was the most unstable situation in which I have ever been. But since then, things have settled down. The people are still poor. The political system is still dictatorial. Everything is normal.

THE BEST IS YET TO BE

I believe that God has many thousands in Haiti. But these thousands will be brought to Him only by the dedicated and sacrificial labors of men as Joseph Albert. He dared to dream. His dream cost him great personal sacrifice. But God was faithful. The sacrificial dedication of those who followed has lead to the salvation of many precious souls. We will have more conversions when we have more sacrificial commitments. The frontiers of the kingdom call for pioneers who are willing to construct a rescue house within a foot of the gates of hell.

Chapter 19

(LANDING FOR REFUELING)

WAITING ON GOD

In January 1986, I felt like everything was going against what I had planned for the next few years. I had come to a stop on the *International New Testament Study Commentary* because I was in the stage of the work that could be completed only in the States. We had to get the final copy made and typeset. We then had to raise funds for printing and actually get it printed. My children needed to get into the Stateside system of schooling in order to get their credits straightened out. Our moving to Puerto Rico had complicated their schooling and they needed to get realigned. We had been working with the School and trying to start a church at the same time. Again, this became a strain. Do not believe the person who says that missionaries can go on forever. They can't. They are people just like anyone else. But when they have to do the work of the preacher, the elders, the deacons, the director and the janitor, they get tired and frustrated.

(I remember when I was growing up on the farm, that it appeared that my brother James used me for a guinea pig on a few occasions. I recall the time we went to a county fair and had a ride on a Ferris' Wheel. We went home and decided to construct one for ourselves. So we did. It stood about eight feet tall. We made a handle to crank it around.

After we finished constructing this contraption, I was persuaded to be the first to test it out. I sat down on one of the one inch by four inch board seats which was at the bottom of the wheel. He began to crank me up to the top. But we had forgotten one minor detail in the engineering. When I was finally at the top of this rickety monster, there was nothing to hang on to for the board seats were attached to the outer circumference of the wheel. Well, James started to gently lower me down backwards, after I yelled a few words at him. The crank broke. Disaster followed. I headed down backwards and slammed to the ground on my back like a sack of potatoes. My entire back was skinned and I was in a daze for ten minutes. I guess I'll never learn.)

BACK TO WEST MONROE

Leaving Puerto Rico was hard for me because I had convinced myself that we were going to stay there for several years. It was the most difficult place we had lived, but that challenge stimulated me to trust more in God and less in myself. One's God does not have to be big when he lives within the sound of church and chapel bell. But on the cutting edge of the kingdom, there is much need for trust in one's God.

We were at that stage of the School where we were struggling to figure out how we could reach a greater audience with the program. It is sometimes difficult to discover something when you have no models. When it came to the development of the School, we were pioneering a work with which little had been done in church of Christ missions.

All of the Bible correspondence work of which we knew in the church of Christ were based upon first principle courses. We had many correspondence courses, but all of these said essentially the same thing in a different way. The system of correspondence was familiar. However, no one had developed a program for preaching and leadership training **in the Third Word** that would be totally by correspondence. That is where we are now, but it took us time to move in this direction. When we felt the frustration of not being able to reach the need, we started looking for a better way to expand beyond our personal contact.

We were thoroughly dedicated to the helping of Third World preachers and church leaders. The entire School is in existence because of these men and women. Therefore, we were on our way back to West Monroe in order to retrench to meet this need.

After much prayer, we decided to return to teach at the White's Ferry Road School of Biblical Studies for a third time. This would give me time to continue to develop the curriculum of the School. It would also give us time to rest and prepare to relocate the base of the School.

LATIN LIVING

No matter how great it is to live in the States, there are a few things I certainly enjoy about Latin American living. These little traits were common with Brazil and Puerto Rico. One of the principle things is the Panaderia. This is not the type of corner store that is in the States. But these are little homes away from home were one can go to have coffee and communal talk. They usually make all sorts of little goodies one should do without. One of the common products of these stores is fresh bread that they bake every day. On Friday and Saturday night the Panaderia becomes the local "jaw-joint" of community men. It is a great place to talk and make friends.

One of the greatest foods of Latin America is bread. No preservatives are added. It is usually fresh and something into which one can sink his teeth. I never could get used to the American "cotton bread" after living in Latin America.

I am not a coffee drinker unless I am in Peru or Mexico or Puerto Rico where they make it right. The worst thing one can do to coffee is add water to it. The less water, the better. But Latins will add a great deal of sugar which must synthesize with the coffee somehow to dilute the bitterness in order to bring out a very wonderful flavor. It is nothing like American made coffee. I now live in South Africa and the South Africans have not yet learned how to make coffee either. The coffee of Brazil is probably the best of Latin America. I can smell it right now.

West Indians of the Eastern Caribbean generally do not drink coffee. It is more of an economic reason than a taste reason. Coffee is just one of the luxuries one can and must do without.

There is, however, one drink in the West Indies and Brazil which has grown on me. It tastes like sour prune juice and is usually produced in any country that grows sugar cane. It is called **malta.** No, it's not alcoholic. However, it will sure put a bite into you the first time you drink it. Martha says it is gross and has never wanted to try it a second time. I guess I can understand what she means. The first time I tried a malta I took one drink and walked away from it. That first drink reminded me of a drink I took when I was about ten years old on the farm. My oldest brother Orlyn was working on a car in front of the house. He had a coke bottle beside him half full of diesel fuel. I went running out to him, not knowing what was in the bottle, and asked "Can I have a drink?" (Well, it looked like a coke.) He looked a little puzzled and said, "Well ... yes." I grabbed it and took one gulp and spit it all over Stafford country. He rolled in laughter. (It was tough being the youngest brother.)

LEAVING THE FIELD

As I said before, leaving Puerto Rico was not that easy. However, we knew that we had to in order to bring solutions to some problems and to complete some projects. I must confess that our move was the smoothest international move that we have ever made. I look back and can only believe that God made the mechanics of the move easy. I believe He knew we needed another break. And I believe He knew that the School had great things in the future.

We had a garage sale to liquidate most of our possessions. Lisa almost cleaned us out. All of us had to be gone for a few hours during one day of the sale and Lisa was left to tend the store until we returned. When we drove up to the house, this lady came and had loaded about six hundred dollars worth of goods in a pickup truck and was about to give Lisa one hundred dollars for the whole lot. Somehow, the lady had convinced Lisa that it was only worth one hundred dollars. Needless to say, Lisa did not mind the store anymore.

In August of 1986, we climbed once again into N5670K and left for the States. We left behind some great friends and some fantastic memories in Puerto Rico.

Chapter 20

(GROUNDED)

THE ROVING EVANGELIST

After about six months in the States, I was one frustrated missionary. My body had moved back, but my heart was still south of the border. Don't let anyone ever tell you that re-entry shock to your native culture is easier than moving to a foreign culture. I suffered those first few months in the States. Our first year in the States was the hardest year we had in our lives. We felt alone. No one could understand what we were going through as a family. We looked like Americans to them, but they did not understand that we were not Americans by culture. It was a time as a family that we had to find solutions alone and with our God. And looking back today, we can see that He again delivered for our needs. We continually praise Him for taking care of us in times as those.

On top of this was the frustration of trying to convince brethren at home of the tremendous need of our preaching brethren throughout the world. The hardest to convince are Stateside preachers who seem to have a hard time getting their minds outside a fifteen mile radius of their work. Preachers are victims of their own culture just like anyone else. And in a materialistic society, one cannot help but become materialistic to some extent. It is hard for someone who lives in a world of luxury - as Americans do, believe me - to understand the predicament of our fellow evangelists who are struggling in adverse circumstances to evangelize their own people.

On top of all these frustrating dilemmas we added a sad note to our history in October of 1986. We sold N5670K. After having her six years, it was hard to let go. Nevertheless, she had served her purpose. In October, and after putting an annual on her, I flew to Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Nevis. A man in Nevis had bought the plane. We went over to the neighboring island of St. Kitts in order that I might catch a commercial flight back to the States.

It was in St. Kitts in 1979 where I landed, planning the establishment of the School in the West Indies. I can still remember flying out of St. Kitts on a LIAT flight back to the States, wondering what it will be like flying down in these islands in our own plane. Now I was back in St. Kitts for a final good bye.

I stood on the St. Kitts International Airport runway that October day and saw our family flying machine fly off into the blue with someone else behind the yoke. I just stood there remembering the good times we had had together. I reminisced the exciting work we had in the West Indies for the past seven years. I remembered the joys of victory and those seminars where we studied with great evangelists. I was sad. A lump came in my throat and tear to my eye. It now seemed that a chapter of my life had been concluded. I stood there and thanked God for the great work that He had accomplished through me. I thanked him for the airplane, without which, we could not have accomplished a fraction of what we did.

STAYING BUSY

I did not come back to the States to retire. 1987 was one of my busiest years in international preacher and leadership training. In fact, I made about three trips back to the West Indies plus two teaching trips to Ghana in Africa. But above all, I was able to finish a dream of eight long years of work. **Ten thousand copies of the *International New Testament Study Commentary*** were printed in October 1987. Copies were mailed to over fifty countries. A second printing of 5,000 copies was planned for 1988.

The reception of the commentary was beyond our dreams. We received requests for it from all around the world. I felt good about the struggles that had been made to bring it about. I felt good about the tens of thousands of people throughout the world who would receive teaching from this one book alone. The effect of the book could be seen in the statement of a preacher in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa who said, "Brother Dickson, we had some brethren trying to divide the church on the head covering issue. We showed them what was said in your commentary and that was the end of the issue." Frankly, the use of the commentary is a little scary. Nevertheless, one cannot know how needed such works are in the Third World unless you live there.

LOOKING AT SURINAM

While in the States in 1988 I began looking for the right country in which to establish an International Center for the School in its new worldwide outreach. This was a most difficult project. We began with seventeen countries and started working from there. We had guidelines by which we went in order to determine the most suitable country and then city from which to send courses throughout the world. We were planning to relocate the International Center of the School sometime in 1989 or 1990.

In 1988 I had the privilege of going on a campaign to Guyana in April. This would allow me the opportunity of visiting both Guyana and Surinam. We were looking for a possible Latin American location as a base of the School at this time.

By 1988 little work had been done in the country of Surinam. It was a small country on the northeast coast of South America. Don and Marian Starks had a list of World Bible School students in the country, most of which were located in either Paramaribo, the capitol, or New Nickerie, a small border town on the western side of the country. We wanted to make contact with these students in order to see what would be the possibilities of starting a church. At this time there was no church in Surinam.

I went with several campaigners to Guyana for the campaign there. From there I started working on a visa into Surinam. Getting a visa to enter the country had proven to be very difficult in the past. Civil war within the country had blocked the entrance of most Americans for some time. Brother Starks had tried seven months to get a visa. He was finally granted one but because of ill health he was unable to go when he and Marian were to conduct the campaign in April, 1988. Others had tried to get visas while in Guyana as late as February, 1988. A civilian government was finally voted in by November of 1988, so I was optimistic about getting into the country. Things had settled down. Therefore, when I went down on the campaign in April I figured that it was time to try again. I wanted to see if I could by chance get a visa in order to contact the World Bible School students in the country.

When I arrived in Guyana on Tuesday, I went to the Surinam Embassy on Wednesday. By the following Monday I had been granted a visa. I couldn't believe it. I told the man at the Surinam Embassy, "I guess God is with me." He replied, "I guess He is." However, I believe that the country was opening up to American visitors at that time. I believe God was saying that it was time to do something with this country for His kingdom. At the time, I knew of no church in the country. I had heard of attempts to start the church, but was not sure of any successful effort.

While campaign efforts continued in Georgetown, I left for Surinam at 5:00 AM on a Tuesday for New Nickerie, Surinam. All I took was a back pack. I did not know the way, but had gone to the library in Georgetown in order to find a map that listed the cities to which I must go into order to make my way across the northeast coast of South America to Surinam. The sun had not yet awaken when I arrived at the bus station. It was a three-hour trip packed in a sardine can minibus that ended up at the bank of the Berbice River. I was too late to catch the ferry across, so I travelled up the river to take a "launch" that took plantation workers across the mile-wide river. I landed in New Amsterdam and it was back into a sardine can bus for a two-hour bounce across the eastern part of Guyana to the border city of Coriverton. The ferry that was scheduled to come across from Surinam to pick us up had caught on fire in Surinam and was delayed for three hours. It finally arrived around late that afternoon. Some of the prospective passengers had heard of the fire and decided not to make the trip in this questionable ferry trap. After it arrived, it took about thirty more minutes to pump out the water that had seeped in the bottom of the boat on the trip over. About one hundred of us who were determined enough to finish our journey, cramped into this boat that looked like an unrenovated version of the African Queen after Humprey Bogart blew it up. As luck would have it, we actually arrived in New Nickerie, Surinam after a rough trip across the six-mile wide Corentyne River and across the north coast of Surinam. After an hour or so hassle through customs and immigrations, I was in a mosquito infested hotel wondering what I was doing there.

I had planned to go on to Paramaribo, the capitol, the following day. But hassles with money exchange, immigrations and whatever, caused me to miss the bus by thirty minutes. Therefore, I determined to stay in New

Nickerie for the next day and a half since there was no possible way to go to Paramaribo and return to New Nickerie by Thursday night. I had to return to Guyana Friday morning in order to catch my flight back to the States on the questionable once-a-week Guyana Airways.

On Wednesday I made contact with one WBS student who had claimed to be a Doctor. He wasn't. However, I was able to share the gospel with and spend almost the entire afternoon with a Hindu family. They dined and entertained me after the tradition of good Surinam hospitality until 10:00 PM that night.

On Thursday, a national strike started in Paramaribo. I needed to return to Guyana in order to catch the flight back to the States. I would loose my U.S. tickets if I missed that flight (I had that type of ticket you would loose if you did not use them.) And I did not have enough money with me to buy more tickets. I was concerned about this strike which affected all government workers, including immigration and custom officials.

All day Thursday I visited and dealt with documentation. I was supposed to meet with a group of Christians that night whom we were told was meeting in New Nickerie. But for some reason, this phantom church did not exist or just did not meet. However, we were able to place an ad for free Bible correspondence courses in the newspaper and also make arrangements with a local radio station to get on the air with World Radio broadcasts from West Monroe.

On Friday morning I gathered with about one hundred other hopefuls at the docks in order to take the

"African Queen" back to Guyana. At 7:30 AM the dock workers, custom and immigration officials, received a phone call from Paramaribo. The unions there called on them to also go on strike. That which I feared, happened. They just packed up their things right before us and walked out. We were stranded. To say the least, there were no few frustrated people there. No flights or ferries were going to leave Surinam. No one knew how long the strike would last. I was stuck and desperation set in.

However, I knew that there was probably more than one way to make this motorcycle fly. I wandered off from the crowd toward the central market. It was up the river a short distance from the docks. I thought about every possible means of transportation to get back into Guyana. I walked by some small boats on the river, and thought, "Why not?"

"Do you know of anyone who is taking people over to Guyana today?" I inquisitively asked.

"Sure," a local fisherman instantly responded. "Just wait here."

He rounded up a friend, who rounded up another friend, who rented a taxi. In thirty minutes we were on our way back into the bush to a small "fishing" village on the east bank of the Corentyne River on the Surinam side. They dipped about ten gallons of water out of this small boat which could not have been over ten feet long. They found a motor, cranked it up and I was on my way across the six-mile wide Corentyne River to Guyana with four other wetbacks. When we hit the beach we scattered and made our way to our selected destinations.

We concluded that campaign in Georgetown with fifty-seven conversions and twenty-seven restorations. During the twelve days of study with World Bible School students we studied with over five hundred different people in about 1,700 different classes. And in Surinam, today the church exists. Several responded to the radio and newspaper ads. Contacts were made. Don and Marian Starks have since made several campaign trips there and converted many. They are to be thanked for their untiring efforts to get the church started in this country. It is often amazing to see the great results that come from a small seed planted.

Chapter 21

(THE AUTOPILOT IS SET)

FROM HERE TO THE FUTURE

It is now 1991 and the School has been in development twelve years from the year of conception in 1979. We first established the operation of the School in Antigua in 1980. During its operation we have developed or evolved into the present system of operation. Our philosophy of operation has somewhat changed. Our philosophy of purpose has not changed. In this concluding chapter I want to state where we are at this time and what we plan for the future.

PRESENT AND FUTURE LOCATIONS

In the original charting of the program, I mapped out a worldwide diagram of extension centers throughout the world. (I was dreaming big.) From these centers courses would be sent to students. The centers would generally be established on all the continents of the world. These centers would be operated by someone who would work all students of that particular continent.

The above is still a dream. We are presently working to establish an International Extension Center of the School in Cape Town, South Africa. Though the reality of our initial plan has not yet materialized, we are still working toward that dream. Only God knows the future. We trust that He will work in our lives to do that which is best for the kingdom.

PRESENT PURPOSE

The purpose of the School has remained unchanged. That purpose has been to train national church leaders to evangelize their own people. This purpose was originally based upon the assumption that the American church would never be able to send out enough missionaries to evangelize the world. It might even be stated that world evangelism is not necessarily the responsibility of the American church alone. In view of these two thoughts, we must depend upon God's army which is already on the field.

This army which is on the field is basically Third World. Our goal has been to get advanced Bible studies to these hundreds and thousands of preachers, prospective preachers and church leaders. Since they are generally Third World, this means that they usually cannot attend internal schools in order to receive that teaching which they need to become effective workers. Actually, the church's determination to concentrate on internal schools in the past in order to train preachers and church leaders in the Third World has stymied church growth. We could not train enough preachers through such schools to meet the needs of the receptivity.

The purpose of the extension School, therefore, has been to offer preacher and leadership training to those who desire such but do not have the finances to attend an internal school. I suppose this need could be emphasized by the response to an announcement I once made to a group of seventy-five Malawian preachers in Rumphi, Malawi. When I explained that the purpose of the School was to give men the same amount of notebook material through extension studies that they would receive in a two-year fulltime School or a four-year Bible major program in a Christian college, they applauded. This is what the International School of Biblical Studies is all about. It is simply an effort to help preachers and church leaders in isolated areas and Third World environments to evangelize their own people.

PRESENT OPERATION

The system of operation has somewhat changed since the inception of the program in the early eighties. While we were in Brazil, extension training was introduced to us. At that time, it was taught that an effective program was conducted by visits of the instructor to the student every two weeks. The purpose of these visits was to re-enforce the student as well as cover the difficult areas of the courses. Most extension programs at that time used programmed materials with the two-week visit of the missionary.

In the West Indies we went to an all-day once-a-month visit. Geography made this necessary. We simply could not make the two-week visits because of time and distance. However, even with the expanded approach and use of the airplane, we still could not meet the need that was prevalent in the West Indies.

While in the West Indies, we came to the conclusion that there was another obstacle to fulfilling the world need of leadership training in mission areas. That conclusion was that there are not enough missionaries who feel called to work with leadership training by extension. All missionaries know the need for leadership training. Some missionaries are locked into internal programs which are serving a need. Though these programs are quite expensive, they are fulfilling a need. However, many missionaries do not have the time or equipment or whatever to work in the area of preacher and leadership training. The tremendous need is there. All missionaries know this and most are frustrated with trying to fulfill it while doing all the other tasks that are loaded upon them.

The above has moved us into the direction of a "full" extension program. Essentially, we have forgotten the personal contact and assumed that the church leader is already self-motivated enough to do his or her work. There are thousands of preachers out there - including denominational preachers - who are struggling to find materials they can use in their own works. Therefore, we have concluded that if we can deliver the materials to them in a format that is usable, they have the ability to decipher it down to their local cultural and religious needs.

The denominational preacher has the same problem as our men. They are searching for material to study on an advanced level. Therefore, through the School we are searching for these independent preachers. Many are using our materials in their preaching and in their Bible classes.

Our present system, therefore, is to send out the courses from our base location to preachers and church leaders throughout the world. With each course there is a Final Test. A student studies through the course at his or her own pace. The course is written in a manner so as to be easily used as a sermon outline or Bible class outline. The Final Test is an open-book test of usually fifty multiple choice questions. The student returns the completed test to us for grading. Each student must make a seventy percent or higher grade on the Final Test of any course before we award him a Certificate of Completion for that course. We presently offer a ten-course program which we call "undergraduate studies," for the want of a better term. The student must make an average of eighty percent or higher on all ten courses before we will graduate him from this program.

We do conduct some internal seminars. However, the seminars are only periodic. We will conduct a seminar to introduce the School in a particular country or location. We will go to an area where there is a high concentration of preachers in order to offer one or two courses of the curriculum. If a student attends a seminar, he can continue on in the program after completing the course which was offered in the seminar.

Students are enrolled upon request. We have enrolled hundreds of World Bible School students and those of similar Bible correspondence course programs. If a student has completed the materials of these first-principle courses, he or she is usually qualified to complete the courses we offer. However, in order for one to be enrolled in the School, we must first receive a request from that individual in letter form. We do not enroll people who are simply recommended to us. If someone knows of an individual who needs to enroll, we encourage the third party to write to that prospective student and encourage him or her to write to us, requesting enrollment. In this way, the self-initiative of the student is encouraged. Without that self-initiative, a student will not complete the program. This also sets up the communication link between us and the student, with the student initiating the communication.

PRESENT CURRICULUM

We are presently developing beyond the initial ten-course program. The thirty-five projected courses of the final program are being written to meet the needs of men and women who are in the daily heat of the battle to evangelize their own areas. The courses, therefore, are very direct and doctrinal. They deal with answering the false teachings of those with whom our students are constantly teaching. They are also directed toward giving the student a fundamental doctrinal base upon which he or she can continue to develop both spiritually and intellectually in the word of God. The present curriculum is as follows:

COURSE NO.	COURSE TITLE
101	Introduction to the Bible
102	Great News
103	How to Interpret the Bible, I
104	How to Interpret the Bible, II
105	The Law and the Sabbath
106	The Sovereignty of Deity
107	The One Body
108	The One Baptism
109	The Soul, Sin & Salvation
110	Satan and His Hosts
111	Old Testament History, I
112	Old Testament History, II
113	The Prophets & Prophecy
114	The Life of the Son
115	Life, Death & Beyond
116	The Last Things
117	Early History of the Church
118	Latter History of the Church
119	The Holy Spirit, I
120	The Holy Spirit, II
121	Miracles
122	Inspiration & Revelation
123	Romans & Galatians
124	John
125	Christian Evidences
126	World Religions
127	Discipleship
128	Revelation
129	Denominational Doctrines, I

130	Denominational Doctrines, II
131	Denominational Doctrines, III
132	Church Growth & Evangelism
133	The Christian Family
134	God's Leader
135	Hebrews

The above courses are written in what we call "light" programming. In complex programming one cannot get as much Biblical material in the average seventy-page book size we use. We are assuming that the student needs the material more than he needs the mechanics of a complex programming structure. We are also assuming that the student will use these courses as a research library for years to come. Therefore, one of our purposes of the School is to build a doctrinal research library for preachers and church leaders.

As stated before, the courses are written in a general outline format. The purpose for this is to aid the student to use the courses for sermon material. When the student uses the course as a Bible class outline, he can easily progress through the material in an analytical manner. We admit that the courses are not perfect according to the demands of those schooled in the art of strict programmed writing. We have simply tried to produce the format and material that meets the needs of our students.

STUDENT SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

In order to pay for the cost of offering the courses free of charge to the student, we have asked Christians to sponsor individual students. We will continue to develop courses as long as we have the funds to print and send out the courses. At this time, 1991, we have been able to do this. However, only God knows the future. Nevertheless, we continue to pray that He bless the production of the courses and that He will bring to the aid of the School those who are sincerely interested in training preachers and church leaders to evangelize their own people.

Chapter 22

(EXAMINING THE CHARTS)

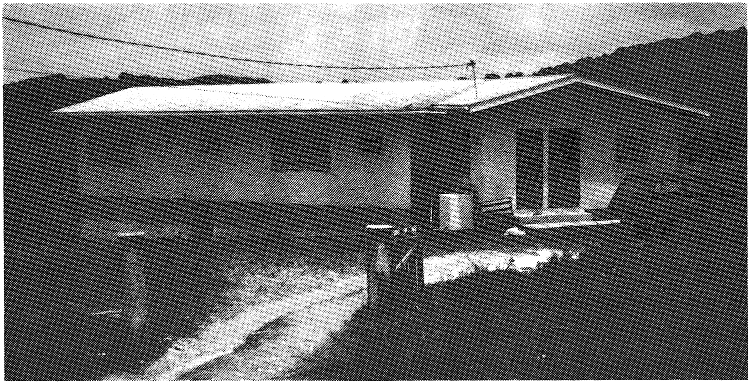
THE FINAL PICTURE

The following are some of the photographs we have taken through the years. We include these as a final picture of the beginnings of the School. They will tell more than we could write.

No, this is not the Caribbean. Here is the "Gold Coast," of south Ghana. From this very coast slaves of years past were loaded on ships destined to the West Indies. Thus began modern history for the people of the West Indies.

Here is the original team of staff who worked to begin the School in 1980 out of Antigua. From right to left in front of N8856P, our 1966 260B Comanche, are Leslie Jones, Jim Crisp, and Roger Dickson. This was the original team of men who began the School.

Some of the early seminars of the School were conducted in this church building in Bridgetown, Barbados. Brother Winston Messiah began this work over thirty years ago.

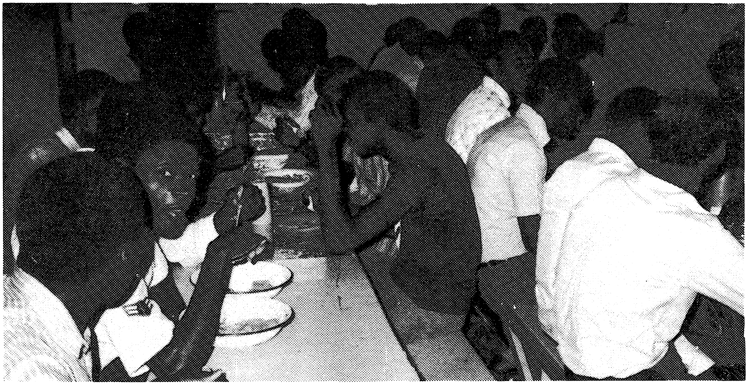


In Antigua we lived in this four-bedroom house. We also did our printing and literature distribution from this house. In front of the house is our East German built Wartburg station wagon.

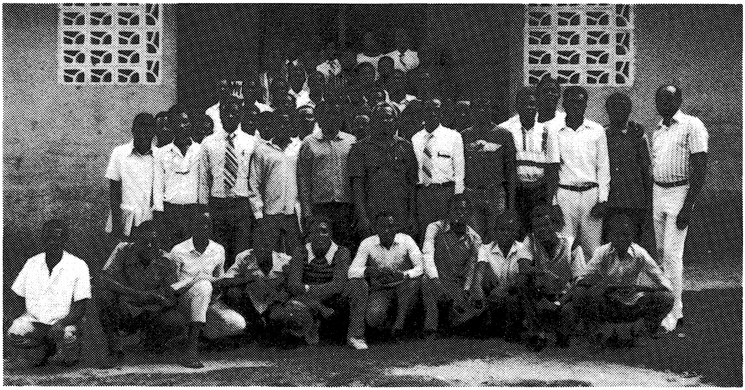
Martha and I are here standing in front of our second airplane, a 1964 Beech Travel Air. This is another load of literature to be hauled out for preachers who would attend another seminar.

During the time we were in the West Indies, we delivered not only literature, but also medicines to needy churches. Lisa is here seated with some of the medicines we delivered during Medical Campaigns.

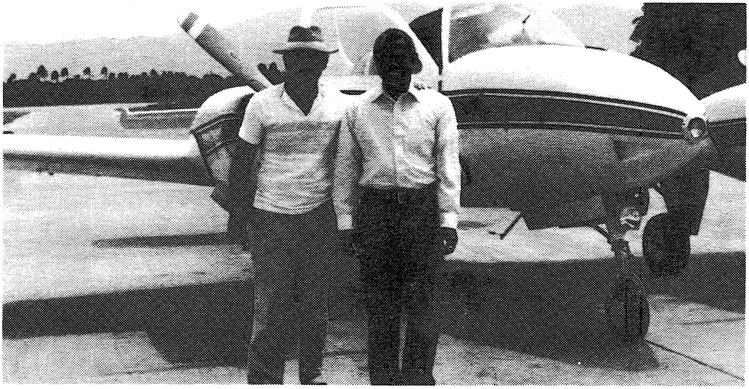
Prudencio Rodriguez is a long-time friend and faithful preacher who started the church in Puerto Plata and Mao, Dominican Republic. He is pictured here with his children and me in front of His house where the church first met in Mao.



One of the great things we enjoyed during the Bible seminars was the eating of local food. The sisters would prepare some of the great West Indian delicacies for us to enjoy during these times of feasting.

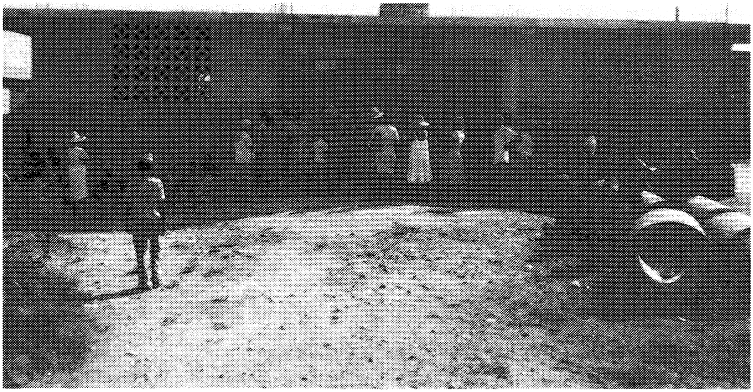


Most of the preachers of northern Haiti were gathered together for this five-day seminar on the north coast of Haiti. This seminar was organized by Joseph Albert and proved to be one of our best.



Joseph Albert (right) worked to begin most of the churches in the extreme north part of Haiti. At the time we left the West Indies, he had established eleven churches.

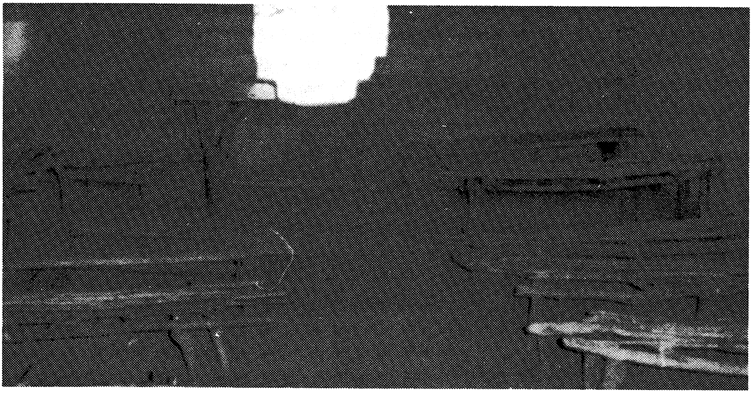
Two motorcycles were purchased by Charles and Belva Rice for the north Haiti work. Two thousand miles was put on one motorcycle the first month by preachers who went out to preaching points.



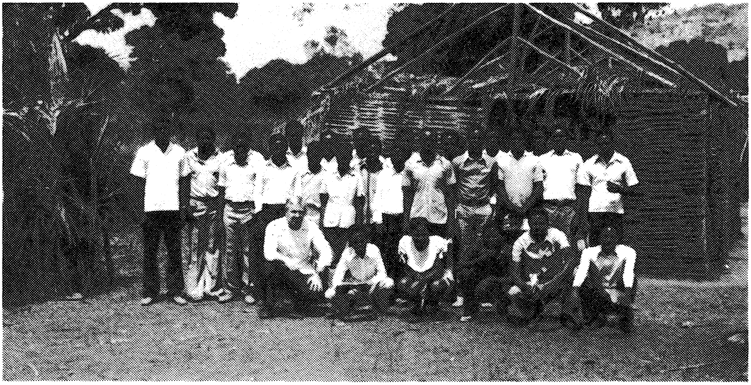
People line up here in front of the Cap Haitien church building in order to be treated during a Medical Campaign. Over 1,000 people were treated during this campaign.

The airplanes were faithful servants almost all the time. However, there were times when things did not go right. I cracked a front hub on this prop which had to be sent to Miami for repair.

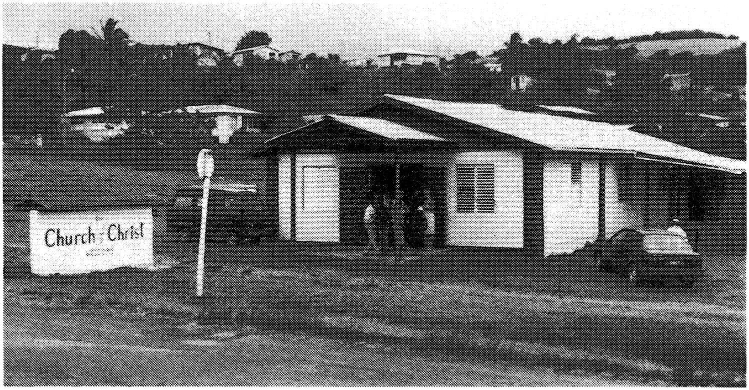
Norman Rhodes and I are standing behind a denominational church group which had walked six hours from the mountains to meet with us during a Medical Seminar.



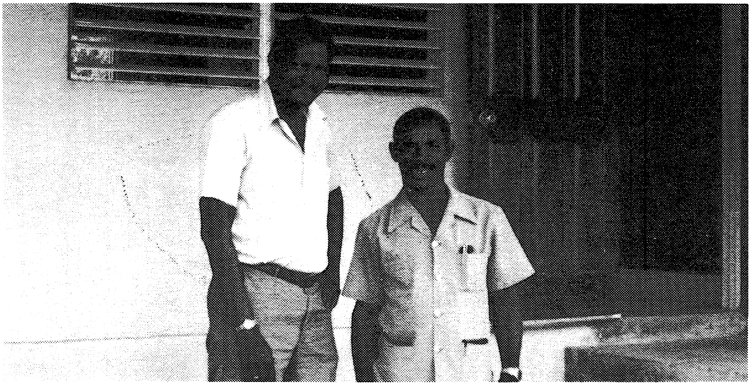
I often wonder how faithful some brethren would be if they had to assemble in some of the typical West Indian church buildings which are in the bush as the one above. Notice the planted log pulpit.



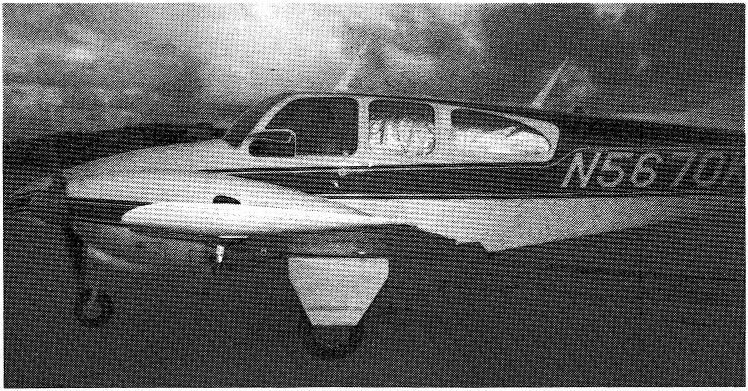
We did not always have the best facilities in which to conduct seminars. This one in the mountains of Haiti has yet to receive its roof.



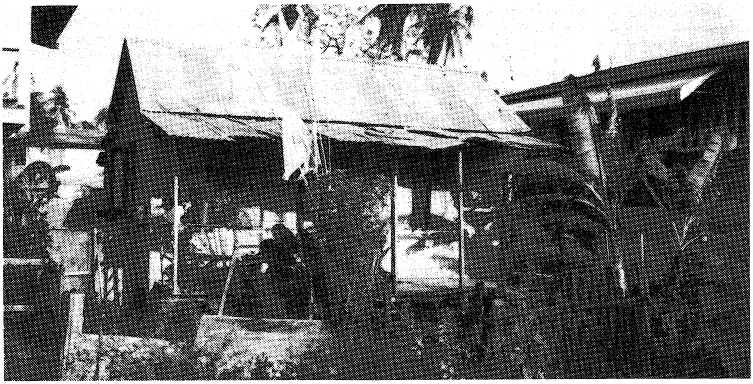
The Liberta and All Saints churches merged. This building was build outside the city of Liberta. The church now meets in this building with Milton Nelson doing the preaching.



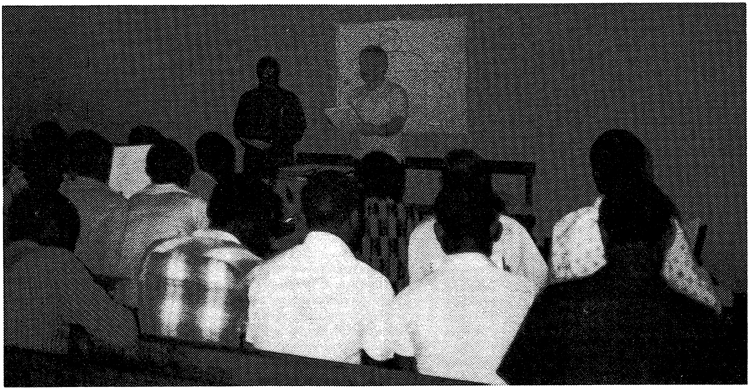
Milton Nelson (left) and Cornelius George (right) are two faithful gospel preachers who have labored for many years in Antigua. Cornelius had been working in Antigua for six years before we arrived.



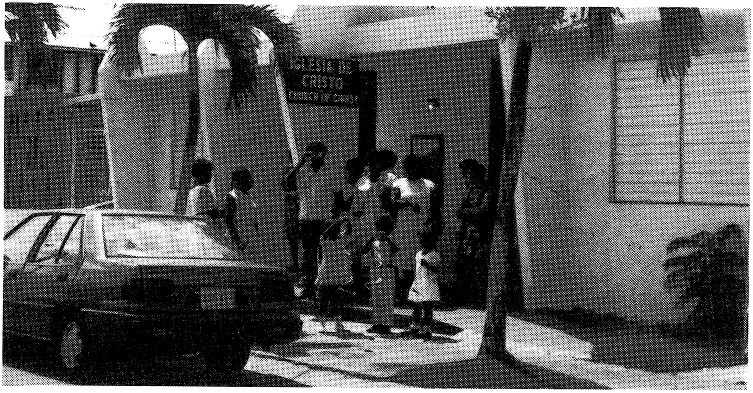
N5670K, our 1964 Beech Travel Air, is here ready for take off from many of the departures from Coolidge Airport in Antigua. This airplane served us faithfully in the West Indies.



Here is a typical West Indian house of older vintage. Cooking is usually done outside. There are many houses now which are constructed out of cement blocks.



When teaching a seminar, we sometimes had to use a translator. Materials were brought to each seminar. We would study the difficult areas of the material and assign the rest to be studied on their own.


IGLESIA DE
CRISTO
CHURCH OF CHRIST

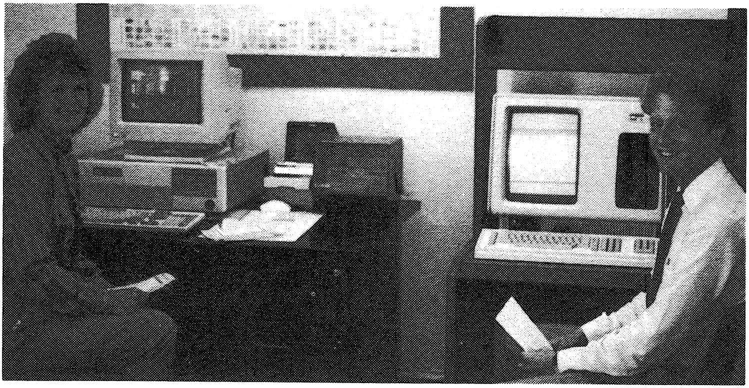
When the School was based in Puerto Rico, we met with the Caparra church. The church was started here by an airline pilot over forty years ago.

Montecarlo

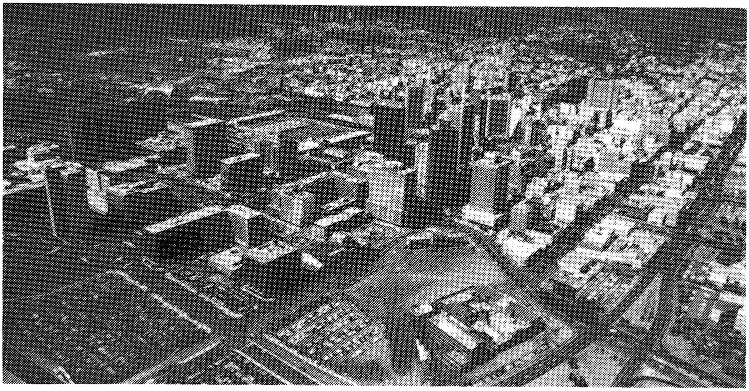
One of my weaknesses has always been eating any local food I could get my hands on. Prudencio Rodriguez (center) knew this and always obliged me by stopping off at small corner stores as this one.

Unloading literature from our plane which was landed on a runway amongst banana trees is real Caribbean flying. This particular airport scene is on the east side of the island of Grenada.

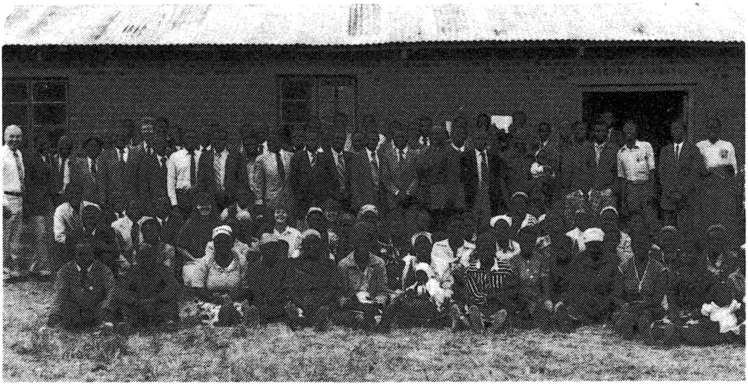
Victor Esprit was the preacher in Montserrat. At the time my family visited the island on the above occasion for a meeting, Claryce Arnold and Sandy Hartman were faithfully working there as missionaries.



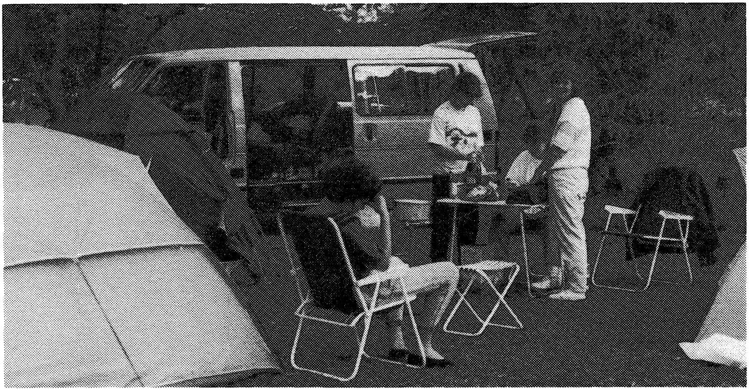
The computer will take the School into the 21st century. All student files and course development go through the systems as the ones pictured here with Martha (left) and Adrian (right).



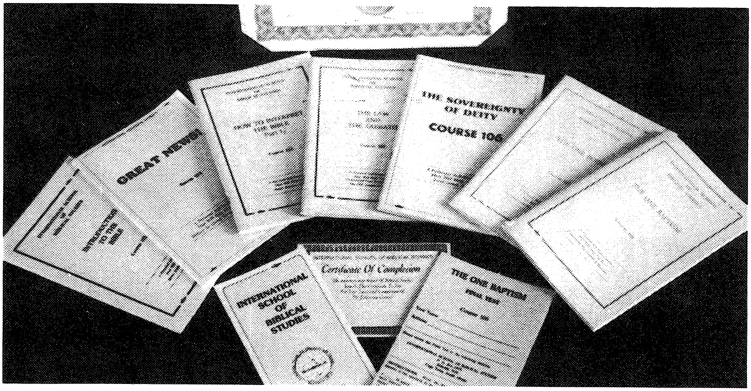
The International Center of the School is now based in Cape Town, South Africa. Courses are sent from this location to countries throughout the world.



Now that the School is based in Africa, seminars of the School can be conducted in countries as Malawi. Adrian Blow and I worked with John Thiessen and his school for training men in Rumphi, Malawi.



Conducting seminars in Africa are often by tent and van, as this one with Adrian and Heather Blow who accompanied us on an 8,000 mile trip up through the eastern part of Africa for seminars.


GREAT NEWS
THE SOVEREIGNTY OF DEITY
COURSE 106
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
Certificate Of Completion
THE ONE BAPTISM

Pictured above are some of the programmed courses of the curriculum we offer through the School. As of 1991, these courses have been sent out to over thirty-five countries of the world.

AN APPEAL

This book was written in order to interest you in the evangelistic outreach of the **International School of Biblical Studies.** All of us who are involved in the School want to encourage you to be a fellow-worker with us in reaching out to the millions of the world who are yet to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. We firmly believe that we can evangelize this world through the training of God's workers who are already on the field. They are bus drivers, farmers, shop owners, taxi drivers, doctors, lawyers and a host of others who are supporting themselves in an effort to reach their own people. They are also faithful preachers and teachers who are supported by churches who want to grow. We ask for you to join with us in reaching out to hold up their hands in our common struggle to lift high the cross of Jesus before the nations. If you want to join with us in this global outreach, please write:

International School of Biblical Studies
Eastwood church of Christ
2500 N. Plum
Hutchinson, Kansas 67502
(Phone: 316-662-3923)